

Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act

albeit very unusual, means which is still open to the hon. member for Peace River by which he is entitled to ask a committee of the House to consider and bring in a bill for the purposes stated in his motion. After all, it is up to the committee to bring in the bill and the committee, undoubtedly having a government majority in its membership, would, if it brought down a bill, undoubtedly have the government's assent. Therefore this motion must not be taken to be a means to defeat the government or to do anything of the kind. This is something which involves the privileges of a member of this House. Therefore I would urge Your Honour to give the most favourable consideration to the points and arguments put forward in support of the motion by my colleague from Peace River.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the proposal put forward by the hon. member for Peace River, as the hon. member for Edmonton West suggested, is an obsolete procedure of the House. In reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Edmonton West may I say he will, having been a member of the procedure committee last year, recognize that there are a great many Standing Orders which have become obsolete in their application, perhaps the most notable example being Standing Order 5.

Mr. Baldwin: How about 75c?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): How about 75c? Well, that depends on the good conduct of the hon. gentleman. Whether this is an indication, Mr. Speaker, of a program of obstruction to be carried on under the leadership of the hon. gentleman, we will find out in due course.

Mr. Baldwin: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. Surely the distinguished, honourable and learned government House leader knows he is not allowed to make such a remark. I was simply using the privilege to which I am entitled. To say that this is obstruction is something I am sure the hon. minister will, on reflection, realize he should not have said and withdraw the remark.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The hon. member knows very well there is no element of privilege involved in those remarks.

To deal briefly with the remarks of the hon. member for Edmonton West, the fact of the matter is that although the committee did deal at some length with the Standing Orders last year, neither this question nor many of the other obsolete and archaic provisions in

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

our rules were dealt with. The mere fact it was left on the books does not indicate anything.

It is not without significance, after what the hon. member for Peace River has said, that neither he nor any of his colleagues were so motivated by their concern about this problem being dealt with by the standing committee last year that they brought forward any elaborated proposals for dealing with the question of private members' business. I am prepared to concede that at some appropriate time perhaps this might be reviewed, but the fact is that until now this concern has not been indicated, at least in the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization.

I make the submission to Your Honour and the hon. member that the provisions of Standing Order 68(1) are to be read in contemplation of the provisions of the Standing Orders with regard to private members' business. I think that common sense requires little hesitation over this point to see that if hon. members such as the hon. member for Peace River were to be in this position every day, the business each day could be pre-empted by a motion of this kind and there would be no possibility to bring government business before the House. Every day there would be one of these motions and it would therefore be impossible to deal with the public business. That, of course, is not the intention or meaning of the Standing Order.

There is a recognized procedure in the Standing Orders for dealing with private members' business. It is quite clear that to give the interpretation to Standing Order 68 sought by the hon. member would, in effect, stop dead the forward progress of the business of the company—the country.

An hon. Member: You are still a corporation lawyer!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): We are still a united company on this side, but I do not see the former member for Colchester-Hants on that side. We are quite prepared to have this question of private members' business discussed by the hon. member for Peace River, if he is still interested in the question, when it comes up under private members' business. We submit it is not in order for the hon. member to have the motion brought forward in the way he has suggested.

An hon. Member: When are you going to speak to the point of order?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): When are you going to open your ears?