

Criminal Code

three-year appointment does not mean it will continue for three years and six months, any more than that a ten-year appointment will continue for ten years and six months. I think the suggestion that these people do not know when their term of office will expire can be challenged; they know very well the period of time for which they were appointed.

Mr. Scott (Danforth): It is the renewal we are concerned about.

Mr. Olson: I know, but if it were made part of the statutes of Canada then automatically the six months notice would extend almost every appointment that we have in the public service. Perhaps this bill provides a useful discussion on giving some protection to employees by way of a six months notice. Nevertheless I think this is the wrong way of trying to achieve this objective.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for York Centre (Mr. Walker).

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. J. E. Walker (York Centre): I have not heard such applause since I addressed an audience in the last election campaign.

I must say at the outset that I find myself in disagreement with the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson), who I thought was a little rough on the member for Danforth (Mr. Scott) when he said this bill was a waste of time. I think it is no waste of time at all to discuss these ideas. Possibly the member for Medicine Hat did not quite know how to begin his opening remarks today, and that was the easiest way of doing it.

I hope that the hon. member who is sponsoring this bill is not cynical to the extent of feeling that no bill or notice of motion brought in during the private members hour ever gets attention. I might point out to him that a great number of them have been referred to committees.

Mr. Scott (Danforth): I was not saying they do not get attention. I was saying my experience is they are rarely if ever passed during the private members hour. On occasion I know we refer the subject matter of a bill to a committee, where it does receive attention.

Mr. Walker: I think the member for Halifax (Mr. McCleave) said he considered this to be the most intriguing title for a bill that he had ever seen, and I agree with him. If I had been able to get on my feet earlier I

[Mr. Olson.]

would have asked the sponsor exactly where the title came from. I was thinking this "purge for the King's-evil" sounds more like a medicinal prescription for stomach cramps than a piece of legislation.

• (5:50 p.m.)

Mr. Scott (Danforth): It is a laxative for ministerial discretion.

Mr. Walker: I believe that the sponsor of the bill this time is possibly carrying the ball for the original sponsor, the former member for Port Arthur. If my memory serves me correctly, when the original sponsor introduced the bill he had spoken for 10 or 15 minutes when he had to be reminded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) that he was speaking on the wrong bill.

There is, as I say, a great deal of confusion and I think it revolves around the title of the bill. At any rate, there are a number of observations in connection with it that I should like to make at this time. One of them is that at the moment these appointments are generally at pleasure, or have a fixed term. Other members have covered the undesirability of making it a criminal offence not to give notice. As I say, the appointments are made for a fixed term or at pleasure, and I can see great difficulties in having to give notice six months in advance.

While other members were speaking I was imagining a board of directors or a commission where three members, for health reasons, incompetence or some other reason, are given six months notice. Their usefulness is over, they have served well and been paid well. What would happen to that board, if it were composed of six members, three of whom had been given six months notice? It would have difficulty making a quorum, if the quorum were more than 50 per cent, at future meetings of the board. These members would be under severance notice. The whole work of the board or commission could be delayed if more than half of the members, who may have been appointed 10 or 15 years previously, had been given six months notice.

These members may have arrived at a time of life when it might be better for them to do some other work. If 50 per cent of the members of that board were under six months severance notice, I would not feel this would be fair to the continuing members. I do not believe it would be fair to the taxpayers of this country to have a board inoperative because of hurt feelings, or because of other characteristics that could develop. Someone