

Privilege—Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West)

House through you, Mr. Speaker, that the interpretation of section 16(1) has been and still is far too narrow and that it could encompass the appointment of privy councillors not of the cabinet, for purposes of the statute, that is to assist you in the administration of this House. I hope my suggestion commends itself to hon. members and to members of the government. As in so many other legislatures all around the world, this question should be in the hands of a small committee of senior members from all parts of the House. Such small committee could, of course, include one or two cabinet ministers, though no more.

In summary of my submission I submit that there is a prima facie case for your consideration, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I have not the text of my motion at the present time because of a problem with translation and transportation from the Confederation Building, but it will be forthcoming. In effect my motion will be:

That section 16 of the Senate and House of Commons Act shall be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections for examination as to its interpretation, its suitability, and report to this House.

I hope that other hon. members will be prepared to comment on my motion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member did raise this point on Monday last, which was the first occasion upon which it could have been raised. At that time he indicated that rather than take the time of the House then, his argument would be deferred to another occasion. I am not sure that wording was enshrined in an agreement, but as a result, the matter is being raised this morning.

At this point I may say that I did not on Monday, I have not now nor do I propose at this time, to rule on whether there is in fact a question of privilege involved. I have some doubt about that as it involves the interpretation of a statute, an interpretation which may have been made on a wider basis. I am troubled as to whether there is any indication of privilege and that it must have been or ought to have been raised as such.

In any case, the hon. member has given an indication that, after some consultation, there might be unanimous consent and that his motion would carry this morning with the subject referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. I am prepared to seek that unanimous consent now. If it is forthcoming then the motion will be put and carried. If it is not, I would propose to reserve on the basic question of whether it is a question of privilege, hear argument and deliver reasons for my decision at some later date. Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member's motion, as he has outlined it, to be put at this time?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the motion and about the difficulty of tabling it physically. Shall the motion carry?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BILL CONCERNING GRAIN HANDLERS STRIKE

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as hon. members are aware, there stands on notice, in the name of the Minister of Labour, a bill respecting the grain handlers' work stoppage. This bill will be introduced on Monday.

In order to expedite this matter perhaps we could make it an order now that, when orders of the day are reached on Monday, we will proceed with the motion for second reading of this bill.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion. Is this agreed?

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I think we can agree. May I make a further suggestion. I am aware of the difficulty the government faces with regard to this legislation and I appreciate having been made aware of the physical contents of the bill by the President of the Privy Council. This will enable me to advise our people. Because of the difficulty in which the government finds itself I want to co-operate. I am bound to say that the position of the Minister of Labour, and of the government, is very much like that of a client of mine with whom I dealt with some years ago. When his wife was already in labour he applied for hospital and medical insurance. When challenged, he could only reply weakly that the situation was one of sudden and urgent necessity. He had forgotten about it in the last nine months.

Nevertheless, we are prepared to co-operate. May I make this additional suggestion. Because of the need to facilitate passage of the legislation which the House in its wisdom may decide to enact, and also because many members will want an opportunity to intervene in that debate, could we not add to the order already suggested this: that we suspend the usual rules as to adjournment on Monday, deal with the bill on second reading—I am talking of second reading only—and then, after all members who wish to make a contribution have done so, refer the bill to the appropriate standing committee.

● (1120)

This would give an opportunity for hon. members to voice their opinions and at the same time advance the legislation so that it can receive examination in committee. If necessary, the committee will consider the question of witnesses as well and proceed with the bill expeditiously, having in mind all the circumstances.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, we are anxious to expedite dealing with this bill, but we think a better way of doing it would be to agree to a limitation on the time of speeches, perhaps not for the introducers and main reply from the opposition, but generally reduce the length of speeches to try to get it through in one day without prolonging the session of the House. In addition, we would much prefer that it be dealt with by committee