

Motions for Papers

decision which I, as a private member, have the right to make. I think it is a useful suggestion, but even if the suggestion implied by the hon. member's question had some degree of merit there would still be an element of danger to the public interest and to the proper method of holding necessary consultations between the various levels of government today.

I am sure the documents in question were produced and prepared for the purpose of enabling frank and free discussions among the officials meeting at that particular conference. I have not seen the documents and do not know what they are, but I suspect many of them were produced merely for the purpose of setting out topics for discussion, possible arguments or particular positions, and if they were produced as suggested by the motion they might give certain people in this country an opportunity to suggest that these were actually policies of the provincial governments concerned, when really they are nothing more than working documents prepared to enable more effective discussions on very important matters which were being considered by this conference.

I think there is a case within public knowledge at this time—I do not know whether I am out of order in referring to it at this time, but if I am perhaps someone will bring it to the attention of the house—regarding a minority report which was made public recently, which a member of a semi-public body referred to as being an alleged matter of policy on the part of a public agency. I do not intend to go further into this particular point but I do think it illustrates the point I am making. What may happen as a result of this motion could be harmful to public interest.

As I said earlier, I have no personal knowledge as to the exact nature of the documents, the quantity or the detail, but I suspect that many of them, if not most, were designed to give an indication of the positions adopted by the provincial governments concerned, and presented as the basis for discussion, outlining the pros and cons. If these are made public they might create what I think would be a completely erroneous impression in relation to the positions taken by provincial governments.

I would suggest that for the reasons I have given it would not be in the public interest to accept this motion. In view of the existing and growing interdependence, whether we like it or not, between different levels of government with regard to many, if not most, of

[Mr. Gray.]

the various activities in which governments become involved today, I think there has to be a continuation of the type of consultation that has been growing up in recent years, and that the very value of this type of consultation is likely to be almost, if not completely, destroyed if the people holding such consultations are not able to present documents as a basis for discussion and are not able to carry on their discussions by means of this type of document or otherwise for fear that the confidentiality of them is likely to be destroyed by the acceptance of this type of motion. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, by way of conclusion I would urge hon. members not to accept this motion.

Mr. Fisher: Question.

Mr. J. J. Greene (Renfrew South): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this motion partly by reason of the fact that I have the honour to represent a group of Indians at the village of Golden Lake in the great constituency of Renfrew South. This motion is, I think, particularly pertinent in regard to some of the problems that affect—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

A message was delivered by Major C. R. Lamoureux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable the Deputy Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable house in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the house went up to the Senate chamber.

And being returned:

Mr. Speaker informed the house that the Deputy Governor General had been pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills.

An act respecting the Revised Statutes of Canada.

An act to amend the Canada Shipping Act.

An act to amend the Privileges and Immunities (United Nations) Act.

An act respecting the Geneva conventions, 1949.

An act respecting The Bell Telephone Company of Canada.

An act to amend the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act.

An act to incorporate Mountain Pacific Pipeline Ltd.

An act respecting Canadian-Montana Pipeline Company.

An act to incorporate The Royal College of Dentists of Canada.

An act to incorporate Canadian Institute of Actuaries.