

Revised Statutes

I would now like to turn to the question of consultation on the *Revised Statutes of Canada*. I have spoken with my colleague, the Hon. Member for Burnaby, who has indicated that the process involved in the adoption of the *Revised Statutes* could certainly be changed in the future. I would suggest on behalf of my hon. friend from Burnaby that Parliament receive the *Revised Statutes* ahead of time in future. Instead of being presented with a *fait accompli* here today, it would have been useful to have seen the *Revised Statutes* in advance in order to discuss them with interested groups. I am thinking particularly of the National Association of Women and the Law which has expressed some interest in this legislation but will not have had any further consultation beyond discussion with our justice spokesperson.

I have just spoken on the question of continued inclusion of sexist language in recent legislation and have now commented on the need for increased consultation with Members of Parliament and the justice community before passing such legislation in future. I would point out that the Government has more than once been caught drafting legislation without gender-neutral language, and in order to avoid this specific problem in the *Revised Statutes*, I would encourage the Government to broaden the consultation process. By doing this, the problem of sexist language can be more fully addressed. Increased consultation would also allow for any other concerns to be raised well before the passage of such housekeeping legislation.

Again I would like to commend the Minister for bringing forward the *Revised Statutes*. In closing, I would like to indicate that the New Democratic Party will be allowing this legislation to pass in all three stages today. The time has finally come for dealing with the *Revised Statutes of Canada*, and after many years I am happy that this legislation will pass.

I would like to briefly mention the work of the many people in the bureaucracy who have worked hard and tirelessly to bring about this important consolidation. The implementation of the *Revised Statutes* will not only help those who use them on a regular basis but will also, I hope, make them more accessible and understandable to people who are not lawyers such as myself. The two concerns I have spoken of are very important and I would encourage the Government to consider them closely.

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I too would like to congratulate the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) on this matter. As the former Solicitor General said, it is true that on the day these volumes are to be published they will already be three years out of date. I wonder if in future it might be possible to do this without such delay.

I also wonder about the *Consolidated Regulations of Canada*. I understand that it has been quite some time since these were brought up to date. I wonder if the Minister of Justice is considering a new publication of the consolidated regulations.

It is true, as the former Solicitor General said, that the most use of these volumes will be made by lawyers, but of course they are also of interest to people in law enforcement of one kind or another and the general public at large. For those who live in remote areas away from up-to-date legal libraries, it is sometimes prohibitively difficult to find out what the law and regulations are on many subjects. One must write away for the statute and three weeks later receive by mail what one thinks is the correct statute, but then it refers to something else and one must send away for another publication.

● (1140)

Would it not perhaps be possible to have a computerized system where, if you want to know what the statute is on a particular subject, or the regulations because they are often as important as the statute, you could punch in certain numbers or letters and have it at hand? I commend that matter for the attention of the Minister of Justice and the people in his department.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Champagne in the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-94, an Act to bring into force the *Revised Statutes of Canada*.

Shall Clause 2 carry?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Clause 2 agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 3 carry?

On Clause 3—

Mr. Kaplan: Madam Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister about that three-year period which was of such interest to a Member of his own Party. Why is the cut-off date so far in the past?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Chairman, I have listened with interest to the remarks of the Hon. Member for York Centre as well as those of the Hon. Member for Western Arctic concerning the cut-off date for the *Revised Statutes*. I think it is fair to say that this is purely a consequence of the administrative work required to bring the *Revised Statutes* into place at a particular point in time. Officials have required that amount of time in order to complete the work.

I remind Hon. Members that not only have we been dealing with a very large volume of legislation, a lot of work has been done in preparing the legislation in its French version which is so important to the equality of the two languages. That added an additional dimension. It is the old story; we could have set it for a subsequent date but that would have delayed the whole process.