

would point out that then we have a bill in which there are contained parliamentary enactments and the removal of clauses, replaced by other clauses in various schedules to the bill, we are really being asked to give away a great deal as parliamentarians. I think it is absolutely abhorrent to the notion of what Parliament is all about to bring in that sort of measure for consideration in this chamber.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Ricard):

That all the words after "That" be left out and the following substituted therefor:

"Bill C-207 be not now read a second time but the subject matter of part I and schedule A to the bill be referred to the Special Committee on Environmental Pollution, the subject matter of the long title to the bill, clause 1 and parts II and III be referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works, the subject matter of parts IV, V and VIII be referred to a committee of the whole, the subject matter of part VII be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, and the subject matters of part IX and schedule B to the bill be referred to each said committee for consideration of so much of the said subject matters as relates and is necessarily incidental to or consequential upon that subject matter hereinbefore first referred to that committee."

It would take a caravan of Philadelphia lawyers to lead one through a labyrinth like that, but this simply illustrates the problem we are up against in dealing with Bill C-207 which covers the waterfront and has a format which is offensive to the simple minds of those of the legal profession because of its complicated and labyrinthic meanderings. I am not in support of simply trying to make the best of a very bad piece of legislation; therefore I move that amendment to the bill.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will appreciate that it might be a little difficult for the Chair to accept the amendment in its present form. The hon. member, by his comments, has indicated that he has some doubt as to the procedural acceptability of his amendment as drafted. If the hon. member would like to offer comments to indicate to the Chair that the amendment as drafted is acceptable, then of course a ruling will be made.

The hon. member knows it is in order to suggest that the subject matter of a bill be referred to a standing committee, but I suggest that to go behind a motion which is before the House which at the second reading stage of a bill, and to divide it in an indirect way, is not acceptable procedure. If the hon. member has other advice for the Chair, I would be pleased to hear it.

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I did not make myself as clear as I intended. I did not have any doubt about the amendment I moved; I was simply pointing out that it appeared to be in a very awkward form because of the difficulty of dealing with the many points in the bill we are considering.

Mr. Speaker: Because I have serious reservations about the amendment, perhaps I should have another look at it. I should think if the hon. member simply moved that the subject matter be referred to a committee, there would be no difficulty. I doubt very much that the detailed amendment moved by the hon. member is acceptable, but

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I will have a second look at it and make a ruling in a few minutes.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, when Your Honour says you will be giving a ruling in a few minutes, does that mean that if there is any argument it should be made to you now?

Mr. Speaker: Yes. I was hoping that anyone having any views to express for the guidance of the Chair would put them forward now. Obviously it would be better to hear procedural argument before we proceed with the next speaker who will, I believe address himself to the substance of the motion before the House.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the amendment comes as a surprise to me, and I use that word in two senses; first, I did not know it was coming and, second, it is a unique and novel amendment. In fact, I think the hon. member deserves a medal of some kind for having drafted it. However facetious that is, it is not to be taken as lack of sympathy for the amendment. Recently we have had two or three attempts to move reasoned amendments, the gist of which were to refer the subject matters of bills to certain entities. There is still on the Order Paper a motion for second reading of the young offenders bill and an amendment thereto which would refer the subject matter to a special committee to be appointed under the Inquiries Act.

A few days later when another member sought to move an identical amendment to another bill—I forget which one it was for the moment but it does not matter—Mr. Speaker was in the Chair and ruled it out of order on the ground that the entity to which the subject matter was to be referred did not exist. When we pointed out that this was on all fours with the proposal regarding the young offenders bill, the response from the Chair was that there was unanimous consent in that case for the reference to be made to a body yet to be appointed.

The point I am making in this regard, Mr. Speaker, is that the Chair does seem to have agreed that it is in order, as a reasoned amendment, that the subject matter be referred. I think that the sum and substance of the last two incidents makes it clear that the Chair feels that the body to which reference is made must exist. We accept that. That is precisely what the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) is doing. He is seeking to move that the subject matter of the bill be referred to bodies that exist.

The only problem that seems to arise in Your Honour's mind relates to the plural nature of this reference. If the hon. member were moving that the subject matter of the entire bill be referred to one standing committee, or one entity that existed, I take it Your Honour would have no objection. What seems to bother you, Sir, is that the hon. member is referring it to several different committees. Your Honour suggests that that bothers you because it seems to be an indirect way of dividing the bill.

I think the ruling Your Honour will make will depend upon your interpretation, almost, of the motivation of the hon. member. Is his prime purpose to divide the bill? If so, Your Honour has good precedent for ruling it out. Or