

The Budget—Mr. Regier

on this very subject which expressly states that no motion shall be presented with a preamble. That is rule 27 of the other place but we have no such rule.

I have, then, to deal with the practice in this house. It is clear from our practice that the preamble has been used a great many times as a preface to a motion of amendments to the motion to go into committee of ways and means. The same applies to motions to go into supply. An extensive review shows that for many years there were no instances of such an amendment with a preamble and then they would come back into style again and be used. I have collected almost all the instances which are numerous but I do not propose to trouble the house with them. Suffice it to say that it is amply established that a preamble is in accordance with our practice. Whether or not it should be is something for the rules committee to determine.

I think it might very well be considered by the rules committee because if you have a preamble then the question of what may go into the preamble raises difficulties for the Chair. The use of the preamble can lead to absurd lengths. By way of example I have only to cite one instance which I found in 1899 of a motion the preamble of which covers 21 pages of the journals. It is, I might say, a procedural monstrosity, but there it is as a precedent. It contains exactly what this amendment contains, that is quotations from political speeches made in and out of the house, quotations from letters and there are even quotations from some confidential documents included in that preamble. That, and the instance of 1932, to which the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate refers, are the only two instances of actual quotations being part of the preamble. I have come to the conclusion that this amendment is not defective because it is preceded by whereas clauses, reasoning clauses or argumentative clauses in the form of a preamble, our practice to the contrary is too well established to be upset.

On the other hand, I am not satisfied that I should follow the precedent of allowing a preamble to include a lot of matter which would properly be part of the debate which would follow the motion. Therefore, without trying to split hairs at all, because I think there is a principle involved, even if the principle is only that the Speaker must do his best to draw the line somewhere between what may and what may not go in the preamble. I have come to the conclusion that the whereas clauses in this amendment are not objectionable in accordance with our practice, but that the inclusion of the eight quotations in one recital and of the two quotations in another recital are bad and should not

[Mr. Speaker.]

be permitted to restore a practice which has not been followed since 1932 and only twice in our whole parliamentary history, as far as I can discover.

Therefore, my view is that if the amendment stopped after the figures "1960" in the second paragraph, so as to eliminate "as illustrated by the following ministerial statements" and the eight numbered paragraphs of statements then set out, and stopped again after the third recital after the words "Leader of the Opposition" so as to eliminate clauses one and two which quote further, the rest of the amendment would be admissible, according to our practice.

This brings me to the point that seems to trouble the hon. member for Carleton, as to what can be done about the motion at this time. This amendment has not been placed before the house. It was moved by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Benidickson) and seconded by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate. Instead of placing it before the house by reading it I indicated my doubts about it and reserved the motion for further consideration by the mover, the seconder and the house. I agree that, if the motion had been placed before the house neither I nor anyone else could alter it without the consent of the house.

I accept the argument of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance that if an amendment is bad in part it is bad in toto and, therefore, must be rejected; but I do not accept his proposition that the motion is not subject to revision with the consent of the mover, or rather at the instance of the mover if it is bad and he wishes to remove the error, provided that it has not been put in the possession of the house.

Briefly, this is the conclusion I have come to. If the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River wishes on his own initiative to ask that what I have described as faulty parts be removed from the motion I would be sympathetic and would feel that I had the authority to accept his proposal and then to put the motion in the possession of the house for the first time after the formal and procedural objections had been disposed of.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River was called from the house; he expected to be back but he is not here. I was the seconder of this motion and, as he pointed out to me before he left that he would leave the discretion to me, I wonder whether the house would consent in the circumstances to my accepting Your Honour's suggestions on his behalf?

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed to?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.