

quotations on the theory of parliamentary government. I do not believe that would be proper in the committee stage.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The principle is not to be discussed when the bill is before the committee; that has been dealt with on second reading when the vote is taken. I believe hon. members generally would like to make as much progress as possible in dealing with this bill. From time to time we have heard many complaints about the rules of the house, and have heard suggestions as to how they should be changed so as to speed up the business of the house. I believe that if we were to abide by the rules of the house as we now have them we could speed up the business of the house very considerably. If one member were permitted to discuss the principle of the bill, then every member would have the same opportunity. I should hope hon. members would not wish to do that.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I quite agree with you, Mr. Chairman, and I would point out that I was not discussing the principle of the bill. Rather, I was correcting a misstatement the minister had made respecting its principle.

Mr. ABBOTT: Or what my hon. friend thought was a misstatement.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): At any rate, I have finished that now, and I shall take very little more time. I do not believe what I shall now say has to do with the principle, but it is related to the practice or working out of the bill. I should like to point out what will happen when we begin to work it out—and surely that is a question of detail.

We have before us a most extraordinary power given to a minister—and I shall not take the time to read it. Hon. members will recall, however, that the minister can really make and unmake regulations; he can do anything he likes. I should like to picture briefly what will happen to the business community of this country. In the first place, one has to explain—maybe the government will make a point of it—why there has been so little opposition in the public press and so little complaint made by businessmen. I suggest the reason is that they are afraid.

We all know that the ordinary banker stands in a good deal of awe of the governor of the Bank of Canada, and is careful of what he says. In the same way we have here a man who is able to make and unmake business. Let me picture what would happen and the unfairness of this thing. It is not so bad

[Mr. Abbott.]

for the big businessman who can come to Ottawa and, if you like, have breakfast with the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and at that time put his case before him. Or, if he finds the minister is not very receptive, he can have an appointment later in the morning with the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply. Then, if he finds he does not get very far with the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply, perhaps he can have lunch with the Minister of Mines and Resources. If that minister is hostile he can have an appointment in the afternoon with the Minister of Transport; and perhaps in the evening, before leaving, he might have a “coke” and ginger ale with the minister of housing.

That is what happens to the man who knows his way around. He is the big fellow who comes to Ottawa. But what happens to the little man? He does not know his way around. In the first place, the expense of coming here offers considerable difficulty. And so we have a situation, which probably was never intended, where he will not be able to have breakfast or lunch with a minister, or have a “coke” or ginger ale with him, or with any of the ministers who occupy the seat in which the Postmaster General is now sitting. That man will be out of luck.

I suggest that is one of the incidents of this legislation. I am sure the minister agrees with me on that, although he may not say so. Incidentally, if I may refer to one further statement by the minister, I believe it will be seen by anyone who reads his speech carefully that the minister was most careful not to say one word in support of this arbitrary power.

There is just one further point I wish to make before asking my questions in detail.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member would wait until we reach section 6 he would find that that subject deals directly with ministerial powers, and it would be proper for him to speak on that subject at that time. If there is no objection to carrying the title, we could do that and then go on to the clauses.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I am getting near the end of my remarks if you will give me permission to proceed. I submit to you with deference that it will be found during similar debates in the last couple of years that almost every time the unfortunate hon. member who begins, as I am beginning this debate, has had to undergo a good deal of friendly barrage from the Chair, but that nevertheless the Chair has exercised a certain amount of benevolence toward him.