

*House of Commons Act*

more intimate matter. The Internal Economy Commission represented an attempt to dress up the constitutional responsibility of ministers for all expenditure within a framework which left the Commons, in theory at least, masters of the interior arrangements of their own chamber. With the growing "aggrandizement of the executive" there are perhaps strong reasons for broadening the composition of the commission to represent the House as a whole.

That is the substance of what I am trying to get at.

We are involved when we think in terms of the private member, Mr. Speaker. In stacking a single individual private member with whatever expertise he has available against the cabinet and the government of the country, we find that a cabinet minister has a staff of five or six people to handle the administrative and political matters of his office. He also has thousands of people in the public service who conceive it their function to support the policy enunciated by the government and the minister. This latter has become so by ministerial edict and governmental comment from time to time. We have that on the one side, supplemented now on the other by the amount of money for research purposes. I consider we would be far better able, Mr. Speaker, to move into the area by trying to arrange for each member of the House to have a financial structure available to him so that he could have a research assistant or executive assistant to help him prepare himself to counter the forces and the development of government itself.

We would be able to reach that stage of putting the private member in a better position if he were able to participate through the members of the House with you, Mr. Speaker, in the preparation of the estimates of expenditure relating to research, to staff and the other amenities necessary to enable a member to fully represent those who elected him. We should move away from the position where all of these concerns and hopes are matters in which the House of Commons should not be involved. We should move toward making the House of Commons a viable unit in our community and away from the Treasury Board which dominates in numbers, if nothing else, the Commissioners of Internal Economy.

For Parliament or the House of Commons to be free, it must be free to develop its potential to the full. It is inhibited now by the Treasury Board and the government dominating the Commissioners of Internal Economy. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) quipped the other day that it

[Mr. Howard (Skeena).]

was a great Canadian who took the state out of the bedroom. I think it is time we took the Treasury Board out of the Speaker's office and put the House of Commons in a position to better serve the people.

**Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, in the bill the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) has put to the House he suggests that we do away with the Commissioners of Internal Economy. The unfortunate thing is that he did not put forward any proposals in the bill to replace the Commissioners of Internal Economy or how the matters presently dealt with by them should be dealt with in the future.

In his remarks, he said that the reason he did not put these things in the bill was that he did not believe such matters should be regulated by statute, that they should be in Standing Orders. In concluding his remarks, he said that perhaps the Standing Orders should provide for a committee that would represent all parties and do what the Commissioners of Internal Economy now do.

I see several difficulties with this, Mr. Speaker. I do not know whether the proposals put forward by the hon. member would change very much. In his bill he did not suggest an amendment to article 17, subsection (5) of the House of Commons Act which reads:

Such several estimates of the clerk, sergeant-at-arms and Speaker shall be transmitted by the Speaker to the minister of finance for his approval, and shall be laid severally before the House of Commons with the other estimates for the year.

To begin with, Mr. Speaker, the requirement of article 17, subsection (5) remains. That is, that the Speaker would have to transmit these estimates to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) for approval. It is true that he has proposed the elimination of article 18 which would take away the right of the Commissioners of Internal Economy to veto these estimates. But they still must go to the Minister of Finance. Even a more serious roadblock is section 54 of the British North America Act. The hon. member did not deal with this. The section reads?

● (5:20 p.m.)

It shall not be lawful for the House of Commons to adopt or pass any Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill for the Appropriation of any Part of the Public Revenue, or of any Tax or Impost, to any Purpose that has not been first recommended to that House by Message of the Governor General in the Session in which such Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill is proposed.