

Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act

a minute or two, but rather that there should be consultations to make sure that it is dealt with at some other appropriate time.

Mr. O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the problem that the House finds itself in and also its willingness earlier in the day to have considered the bill at this time if we could.

The nature of the statement which I would make at this time would be to refer to some amendments which I am prepared to move at committee stage. They are important and it would take perhaps five or six minutes to inform the House of their nature. That is all the time that I would require but, of course, I am in the hands of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair is at the service of the House if hon. members wish to consent.

Mr. Symes: Mr. Speaker, we in the New Democratic party originally intended to see this bill move to committee after private members' hour today, assuming that we had had the hour, or a large portion thereof, to comment on the significant amendments that the member for Scarborough East was going to announce on behalf of Bell Canada. I feel these amendments are too important to devote only one or two minutes to comment on them. I would hope that we could arrange that the Bill C-1001 be brought forward next Thursday at private members' hour, but I am not prepared to proceed at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. There being no unanimous consent I assume that this completes the consideration of private members' business. It being after six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At 6:25 p.m. the House took recess.

● (2002)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT**AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH OFFICE OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL**

The House resumed, from Wednesday, March 8, consideration of the motion of Mr. Buchanan (for the President of the Treasury Board) that Bill C-10, to amend the Financial Administration Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

● (2012)

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I had just begun my remarks late yesterday afternoon when six o'clock came. I should like to proceed now with my remarks with respect to Bill C-10.

While it is true this particular piece of legislation has not received a great deal of attention from the media—we are certainly not in the headlines of the major papers across the country—it is probably one of the most important bills to have been introduced in the House in some time. Indeed, my first question is: Why has it taken the government so long to bring the measure forward? This is a bill which, if properly implemented, could save the Canadian taxpayer a heck of a lot of money. We know this from experience. I was a member of the public accounts committee for some three years. We heard some horror stories there with respect to government expenditure and management—the AECL and Polysar were outstanding examples to which I shall refer later in my remarks.

In all responsible households across the country people budget. They do everything they can to control expenditure on a weekly or monthly basis. Even though we have a House which seats 264 members at the present time and will be accommodating up to 282, let us not forget that what we are doing here in Ottawa is essentially what families are trying to do at home, whether in my riding of Brant or in Regina, Windsor or elsewhere. Today people are desperately trying to make ends meet. If they cannot do so, they go into debt. In some cases they go into debt through lack of knowledge or knowhow. Here in Ottawa we have gone into tremendous debt, perhaps not deliberately in some cases but because of a lack of knowhow.

Bill C-10 provides for the appointment of a Comptroller General who will be able to keep a check on government spending. We must certainly get a tighter grip on the handle of government spending. The same can be said about small businesses. Today more than ever before they are desperately trying to control expenditures in rough times. We can relate households, small business, and even large corporations with what we are attempting to do here and, through legislation hopefully our objective will be reached.

I have considerable reservations, though, about the form of the bill. I am not opposed to the measure. Looking at this piece of legislation, I find the following in clause 1:

The governor in council may appoint an officer called the Comptroller General of Canada to hold office during pleasure and to perform such duties and functions as may be assigned to him by the Treasury Board and the Comptroller General of Canada shall rank as and have all the powers of a deputy head of a department.

That is all it says. I do not want to sound like a prophet of doom and gloom but frankly I have a lot of sympathy with Mr. Harry Rogers, whom I do not know. When he took a look at the bill he probably sat back—I am hypothesizing—and wondered what he was going to be able to do. Hopefully, when the bill goes to committee, something more positive will be proposed by way of amendment.