

Post Office Act

The proposed amendment of the hon. member for Hillsborough reads as follows:

That all the words after "that" in the said motion be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

The further consideration of this bill be deferred until the standing committee on transportation and communications has considered the subject matter thereof.

The question before the house on second reading is the principle of the bill. This, of course, is well known and recognized by all members. An amendment at this point must oppose the principle by way of a reasoned amendment or otherwise. It seems to me that the hon. member for Hillsborough is proposing an amendment which does not oppose the principle of the bill nor does it support it. It merely asks to set the bill aside while the subject matter is considered.

I am in full agreement with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that effectively the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Hillsborough would produce the same result as an amendment in the usual form. On the other hand the Chair must give a decision on the basis of the amendment as proposed for the consideration of the Chair. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, along with the hon. member for Peace River, claims that this is a reasoned amendment which effectively opposes the principle of the bill. I suggest to hon. members that this is not the effect of the proposed amendment. It merely seeks to postpone a decision until such time as certain conditions have been fulfilled.

I am also appreciative of the difficulty arising out of the fact that there is a form, No. 93, which is quoted at page 396 of Beauchesne's fourth edition. I have studied this form and it has caused me some concern. Hon. members will realize, however, that it is not exactly in the same terms as the amendment now before us. For one thing it does not propose the same type of remedy. I suggest there is, on this basis, a substantial difference between the form set out by Beauchesne at page 396 and the form of the amendment advanced by the hon. member for Hillsborough.

The form of amendment No. 93 actually opposes the principle of the bill. If hon. members will study this paragraph closely they will see that if this amendment as proposed in form No. 93 were carried the bill would effectively be taken out of the consideration of the house and to all intents and

[Mr. Speaker.]

purposes it would be in my view in opposition to the principle of the bill. On the contrary, the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Hillsborough merely attaches a condition that is not an amendment in opposition to the principle of the bill and is not a reasoned amendment.

Again I realize we are cutting things a bit fine, if I may use this expression, because in practice the result of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Hillsborough would be exactly the same as if this amendment were proposed in the usual words which are contained in the stereotyped form of amendment on second reading to the effect that the subject matter of a bill be referred to a committee. I am just wondering whether in the circumstances hon. members would allow the hon. member for Hillsborough to change his amendment to read according to the usual form. If he does not wish to do this, I would be rather suspicious that there is a substantial difference between the amendment he proposed and the one the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre wants to advance.

In the circumstances, with much regret, I do not think it possible to accept the hon. member's amendment.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, since it is six o'clock I wonder whether the hon. member for Hillsborough could have until eight o'clock to decide whether he wishes to be stereotyped or would prefer to be swinging.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would have risen at this point in any event. Hon. members in all corners of the house have expressed considerable interest in the function to be given by Your Honour at six o'clock this evening. In order to assist the hon. member for Hillsborough in his reflections I wonder whether an order of this house could be made that the house not sit between six and seven o'clock this evening in private members' hour but that the opposition not, of course, lose the hour involved.

Mr. Baldwin: And the priority.

Mr. Speaker: If this is agreed, it is so ordered. The house would then allow the hon. member for Hillsborough the opportunity to speak to a point of order at eight o'clock.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.