

Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act

68 was introduced provided that the first method of introducing a bill is not debatable. Standing Order 68(2) reads:

A motion for leave to introduce a bill—

Of course, this is not the method I am employing.

—shall be decided without debate or amendment.

Consequently, most bills are introduced in the normal way and this has been the general practice. However, I submit that if this motion were placed upon the Order Paper under "Daily Routine" it would be a debatable motion.

Let me say very briefly, Mr. Speaker, that I have had occasion over some months to look into this practice. I have wondered why it has never been used in this House. It was the practice in the United Kingdom. As a matter of fact, originally, the proper method of introducing a bill, whether it was a government bill or a private member's bill, was to appoint a select committee which prepared the bill. Then, the chairman of the committee brought in the bill in accordance with the practices of the House.

Apparently that practice has never been altered so far as Canada is concerned and so far as this House is concerned, particularly if one reads the second part of Standing Order 68(1). However, the United Kingdom House of Commons saw fit some 80 years ago to change that practice by introducing what is known as the ten minute rule. Under it, there is a motion for leave to introduce a bill and a limited amount of time is allotted to the sponsor to speak, as well as those who are opposed. A committee is then appointed and brings in the bill. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, that custom endures right up until 1964.

I have here an extract from the United Kingdom House of Commons Debates for January 14, 1964, recording that on that date a motion was moved by Mr. Fenner Brockway, a private member of the House, for leave to bring in a bill "to make it an offence to discriminate" against any person, etc. It was debated by the sponsor for some 10 or 15 minutes. The question was then put and agreed to, and a committee was appointed to prepare and bring in the bill at a stated date.

Later in the same year, on July 22, 1964, Mr. John Parker, also a private member at Westminster, introduced a bill in the same way. A committee was appointed and brought in the bill. For some reason we in Canada, in

[Mr. Baldwin.]

this House, did not see fit to attach to the employing of a committee the reservations which have been established in the United Kingdom. It is my argument, therefore, that I am entitled to use, as is any hon. member, this particular practice which I have referred to and which forms the basis of my motion today.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, may I say that although this procedure may impose certain difficulties upon the government, I submit that the government has had an option in the past to deal with this particular rule and should not now thrust upon Your Honour the onus of making this decision.

The simple ordinary language speaks for itself. Any other interpretation would be twisted and contorted and not in keeping with what was intended as an alternative means of introducing a bill. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that other members will intervene on this somewhat novel point. Your Honour may wish to take the matter under advisement.

I think my motion is a good one for a good cause but it has a collateral purpose. The rules governing the introduction of private members' public bills smack so much of hypocrisy in the sense there is no opportunity at any time to have them brought to the point of decision by the House. Before this debate is over I hope that either the Acting Prime Minister or the government house leader will be prepared to announce that the present method of introduction of private members' bills, the method of appointment of a committee to consider the bringing in of such bills involving the U.K. ten minute rule, and the need to allow such bills to come to a vote, will be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization forthwith. In that case, Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to ask that this matter stand. I think it is more than time for some method to be designed by which private members' public bills can be considered and put to the question in this House.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Peace River I should like to commend him for bringing this matter before the House. I realize that since the notice was given on Friday there has been an opportunity for Your Honour to spend an enjoyable weekend going over all the precedents, but perhaps there are further arguments for some of us to put forward.