

person, to appear before the select, standing or joint committee to outline their views and indicate, if they have a special interest, what they object to in the bill. That is a right with regard to a hybrid bill which, in the United Kingdom at least, has now been settled as being beyond any doubt.

I suggest to Your Honour that this course has been incorporated in a standing order of the United Kingdom Parliament, namely, Standing Order 38. In addition to that, there is the question of notice and examination. The question of examination is made quite plain in the United Kingdom. There must be an examination, as in the case of a private bill, by the examiner of private bills in that jurisdiction. Are we to have the same result here? What about notice? There will be established by this legislation, if it is passed, a special group of private individuals who will be affected, namely, the shareholders. This limited group of the public will be invited to subscribe for shares. They will have rights over and above those of the ordinary public. True enough, the average person, the ordinary taxpayer, will be affected to the extent to which the government becomes a subscriber for shares, to the extent to which the government through its directors seeks to direct to some extent the policies of this corporation. But there will be established a particular and special group whose interests will be affected if this bill should pass.

● (3:20 p.m.)

Other hon. members will be intervening, and I do not want to take up too much of the time of the House. I would point out to Your Honour, in conclusion, that if what I say has any effect on your views, if you are inclined to hold that this is a hybrid bill, then I suggest that we should give that fact careful consideration. While it is true that we do not have a great many precedents and we do not have anything in our Standing Orders, I would refer Your Honour to our first Standing Order which provides that:

In all cases not provided for hereafter or by sessional or other orders, the usages and customs of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as in force at the time shall be followed so far as they may be applicable to this House.

I submit that we are in a position where the government—and I do not say this disparagingly—while paying lip service to private enterprise and to the private profit motive, is steadily enlarging the area of socialist activities. I am not going to argue whether or not this is right. I am simply saying it is a matter of fact. All one has to do is to read the legislation. We are going to get an increasing number of these kinds of bills, and I think this House is entitled to know whether they should be brought in as government bills, or as private bills. If they have the characteristics of both, they should receive special treatment. I suggest to you, with due deference to the Minister of Finance, that to bring in a bill of this nature and to expect it to be processed by the ordinary standing orders, rules and precedents of this House of Commons is completely wrong. I ask Your Honour to give due effect to this argument and to what else may be said. If you

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hold it is a hybrid bill, I ask Your Honour to consider carefully what the consequences will be and what the future carriage of this bill will be in the light of the practices of this House.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, if in what I have to say I am to a considerable extent on the same side as the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), let me assure the House at the outset that it is not because I see this bill as incipient socialism. As a matter of fact, if the bill were a little more socialistic it would be a lot better. In any case, we are into another of these procedural arguments which fill the galleries and bring the press people back so that it can be reported in full in tomorrow's newspapers. But despite that comment, call it what you will, this is a very important point of order and one that could become more important as time goes on.

May I say that to call a bill a hybrid bill is not to use a nasty word. We do not do that sort of thing in the House, anyway.

Mr. Baldwin: Question.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): May I also say that it is correct that we do not have in our Standing Orders any rules that deal specifically with hybrid bills. Nevertheless, we do have a citation on this matter in Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, and those citations make it clear that if there is before us what is recognized as a hybrid bill, it should get the treatment that is given to private bills.

Now, Sir, I looked again today at our Standing Orders and I find that there are 26 Standing Orders relating to private bills, Standing Orders 90 to 115, both inclusive. If I wanted to give a digest of those 26 Standing Orders, the House would certainly be empty before I got through it. Nevertheless, because one of the results of the point of order being raised could be, as I think it should be, a decision by Your Honour that this is a hybrid bill and should be treated as such, I think it is important to state as briefly as I can the rationale on the basis of which private bills are given treatment different from that given to public bills. The reason for such different treatment is this.

A private bill is a bill for a single person, a small group of persons or a company, any selected group of individuals who constitute less than the community as a whole. A private bill is one seeking to provide something special, a special privilege or concession for a group of the Canadian population which is less than the country as a whole. Therefore, we have accepted the principle over the years that when a private bill is presented there are two particular things that must be done that are different from what is done in the case of a public bill. In the first place, that private bill must go to a committee before which the promoters of the bill must appear and justify it. The second thing that must be done is that at the hearings of the committee to which the bill is referred the general public, or anybody who is affected by the private bill, must have the right to appear and state a defence against what is proposed. In other words, if a private company is seeking an incorporation to do