

*House of Commons Act*

perhaps a more appropriate word—to the Governor in Council to appoint:

—four members of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada who are also members of the House of Commons, who, with the Speaker of the House of Commons, shall be commissioners for the purposes of this section and sections 17 and 18.

This is the group which we generally refer to as the Commissioners of Internal Economy, and the words "internal economy" are the heading to these particular sections in the House of Commons Act. The current commissioners comprise the Solicitor General (Mr. McIlraith), the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) who, as you must admit, has a powerful influence in financial expenditures, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald), who has a powerful influence in the political arm of the government, and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien). So, effectively, the Commissioners of Internal Economy, because the cabinet members outweigh Mr. Speaker on a four-to-one basis, ensure that the expenditures of the House of Commons for all of its activities are subject to control, authority, direction and interference—I do not say they are interfered with or that they are controlled—of the cabinet.

The bill before us seeks to repeal sections 16 and 18, which I have just read, of the House of Commons Act, and would then leave in statute law, if such repeal is agreed to, no statutory arrangement or provision for the selection of whoever the Commissioners of Internal Economy shall be. One may argue that this leaves a blank spot, but really the conception that I have, following that repeal, is that because this is a matter affecting the House of Commons, not affecting Parliament, we should not involve either the Senate or the assent of the Crown. It should be a matter that the House of Commons should deal with internally, through the Standing Orders. And because I did not want to follow up a companion reference in this bill to the Standing Orders—because that would involve asking the Senate to agree in theory to what the Standing Orders of this House should be—I have left it blank and subject to further development in argument.

These are things that I think should be covered in the Standing Orders of the House, because the Standing Orders are the rules of the House with respect to the House and its own activities. This matter was developed and examined some eight or ten years ago, or thereabouts, in the United Kingdom where a

similar system existed. We can see that under the Standing Orders naturally, Mr. Speaker, our first member and spokesman for the House, would continue to be the prime effective member of the commissioners of internal economy and that he would be chairman. Without defining or predetermining it, the other members of the committee would be drawn from the other parties in the House.

• (5:10 p.m.)

I think there is certainly no priority of view about the value of this institution as between one member and another. We are all equally concerned about the institution of Parliament, about the operation of the House of Commons and the valuable contribution it can make to Canada and the Canadian fabric. The reasoning behind this approach is that we should take cognizance of the development in the field of research, the concern for the effect and influence of the private member and the development of the committee procedure, by removing what is an obsolete and archaic part of our statute law so that we could, under our Standing Orders, draw other than cabinet ministers into the Commission of Internal Economy. Then, Mr. Speaker, we will be able to develop a structure to meet the needs of the people today and to serve them better than is the case at the present time.

If I may I should like to read briefly from an article written by Professor J. R. Mallory, of McGill University and published in *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* in 1957. Though it is dated by 12 or 13 years, it is valid because of the situation of the Commission of Internal Economy. Their method of selection has not changed in that period of time. In the last paragraph, Professor Mallory says:

The Internal Economy Commission as presently constituted is a throwback to an older and very different House of Commons. It reflects a House in which an organized opposition had yet to appear, and in which the cleavages between the front bench and the private member were less marked. Party government and ministerial responsibility are the essential characteristics of the government of Canada, and they are bound to set the pattern of organization even for the internal affairs of the House of Commons itself. But the House of Commons is more than a mere framework for party government. The House, by tradition and by inclination, has an identity of its own which transcends the claims of party and of constituency in some matters. While the House will bow to ministerial direction and cabinet dominance in the government of the country, the private member finds that the domestic economy of the House is a much