

Privileges and Elections

proceedings of the committees, which could be saved and read at a later date if it is not possible to do so immediately.

This would be of great help to Canadian taxpayers who are interested in public affairs, because if they miss the proceedings when they are televised, such programs cannot be repeated the way, for instance, hockey games are. It does happen also that we miss some comments on a program, even on television.

The advantage of the report is that it can be kept for future reference.

• (9:10 p.m.)

I feel this would be a much cheaper way to inform Canadians and they would all be satisfied. Some advertising might be required at certain times, at the beginning of each session, for instance, when people might be invited to ask for their copies of *Hansard*.

This is the suggestion I wanted to make in connection with the resolution moved by the government.

[English]

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE OF REVIEW OF REPRESENTATION COMMISSIONER ACT

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council) moved:

That in relation to S.22 of the Representation Commissioner Act, Statutes of Canada 1963, C.40, the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be empowered to review the provisions of the Representation Commissioner Act and recommend to the House any amendments, alterations or modifications thereto that to the said committee shall appear to be necessary or desirable.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have just a few words of explanation in respect of the background of this motion. Perhaps I might refer hon. members to the Statutes of Canada for 1963, chapter 40. Hon. members will note in the statute which created the role of Representation Commissioner the following provision is contained which I shall set out in full to the House. It is section 22, which reads as follows:

The Prime Minister shall, at the earliest convenient opportunity after the commencement of the first session of Parliament after 1968, propose to the House of Commons that an order be made and referred to the appropriate committee of the House of Commons for the review by such committee of the provisions of this act and for the recommendations of such committee with respect to any amendments, alterations or modifications

[Mr. Laprise.]

thereto that appear to the committee then to be necessary or desirable, and upon such order being referred to it the committee shall consider the matter of the order and report to the House its recommendations with respect thereto.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) I am moving this motion at the present time. This session which commenced in October, 1969, is the first session after the year 1968, and in relation to the business of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections this is the earliest convenient opportunity at which the matter can be dealt with.

The House will recall in a timetable which I think has been generally agreed to by the House that it was recognized that the first item of business to be dealt with by the House should be the general changes to the Elections Act. They are the most pressing in terms of time because, as hon. members will have noted from the report of that committee, they involve a substantial expansion of the electorate which will have to be taken into account by each returning officer in each of the ridings and by the Chief Electoral Officer in re-drawing each poll division. At the same time the changes discussed will involve an extensive change in the election procedure generally.

If the Chief Electoral Officer is to be prepared in 1972 or thereafter for the next general election, it would be necessary that these changes be dealt with by the House and enacted into law by the end of the present session. I am pleased that the committee has now reported on detailed recommendations or changes in respect of the Elections Act. Early in the next part of the session the government will be bringing forward a bill based on those changes and we would hope, in order to meet the timetable of the Chief Electoral Officer, it would be dealt with before the House rises in June. The way is now clear in the committee for this reference.

The terms of the present motion invite the committee to consider the institution of the Representation Commissioner, which was set up for the first time at the federal level in 1963, in light of the experience that gentleman has had in dealing with redistribution following the 1961 census. Now that the commissioner has had experience in dealing with the structure of redistribution set up by this Parliament, it is appropriate to make some decisions in respect of how his office should continue and in what manner he should carry on his operation.