

*House of Commons Act*

transfer of control over spending to the committees are accepted, the committees will have greater independence. They will have to justify their budget, but once they have it they will be in a position to spend the money without further reference to the House.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Chairman, if I may clarify one of the things which concerns me, earlier this morning we changed the Standing Orders. They say that the committee chairman shall not incur any expenses until the chairman of the committee or the member acting for the chairman has presented a budget and so forth to the Board of Internal Economy. What I am concerned about is the legal position of the committee chairman. I am a committee chairman and if we call witnesses during the summer and incur expenses, am I left in some kind of limbo where I have no authority to incur expenses until the budgets are presented? Is there a mechanism which enables committees to function between now and September 9?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Chairman, these provisions do not come into effect until September 9 for a good and valid reason. We do not want to affect anything going on this summer. The Hon. Member can rest assured that he will not be incarcerated for misappropriation of funds if he carries out his mandate. He has the authority and will continue to have that authority. When we come back there will be a new regime which will involve a mechanism, which is now being worked on, about how to operate this system. I think it will satisfy all Members and I alluded to it earlier. It simply provides that, for example, committees will have a basic amount allocated to them equivalent to what they will have available to carry on their normal operations in Ottawa. They will then simply have to make a presentation to the board with respect to any other activities, whether it involves travel or extraordinary investigations. All that will be subject to justification to the board which will be sitting on a frequent basis so that committee members will not be inconvenienced by having to wait for adjudication on their budget request.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Chairman, as an ordinary private back-bench Member, so that the House Leaders are not patting themselves and the committee on the back, I want to extend congratulations to the committee and the three House Leaders for what they have accomplished. With one small caveat. I worry that when all three House Leaders agree on something like now we operate down here, does that mean less work for them and more for us?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** You bet your life it does.

**Mr. Ellis:** Mr. Chairman, I want to briefly deal with this legislation. There are some things in it which I have a great deal of difficulty with.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Not at this hour of the night.

**Mr. Ellis:** Yes, at this hour. The Hon. Member for Regina West kept us here for hours talking about things that some of us had very little interest in so another two or three minutes on this will not be too bad.

I want to put on record that Clause 16 of this legislation reflects legislation which was prepared by the Lefebvre Committee and does not reflect the reforms put forward by the Auditor General in his 1978 report. The fact is that the Clerk of the House does not and has not for many years prepared any estimates. The Sergeant-at-Arms does not and has not for many years prepared any estimates. The estimates have been prepared by the House administration. In addition, when those estimates have been looked at by the Speaker or given to him, they are then referred to the Standing Committee on Management and Members' Services for their scrutiny as they have been for many years, before they go back to the Speaker.

I am not going to get into the things that happened in committee, but I tell you that there are four Speakers who are on record as supporting that type of administration. There are three Auditors General who have studied the system and are on record as supporting that kind of system. I only say to you, Mr. Chairman, that I do not intend to make a motion to change this piece of legislation tonight. It comes at almost the eleventh hour of our sitting, literally as well as figuratively. I do know that legislation such as this can be changed and I think that with the putting in place of new rules for the Commissioners of Internal Economy that it in fact should be and perhaps will be.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

On Clause 2—

**Mr. Nickerson:** Mr. Chairman, Clause 2 deals with the date on which the Act shall come into force. It is evident that this Clause was drafted by someone who did not know whether this Bill was to be dealt with before or after September 9. It is now quite evident the Bill is to be dealt with before September 9. Therefore, unless there is some good reason why we should retain the present wording, it would be my suggestion—and unless I get the explanation it would be my intention—that we make the necessary resolution to reword Clause 2 to say that this Act shall come into force on September 9.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Is 1985 okay?

**Mr. Nickerson:** Nineteen eighty-five.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, Parliament lives! There is a legislator who reads legislation. In deference to that distinguished Parliamentarian I accept his suggestion and I therefore move:

That the words

“, or be deemed to have come into force,” be deleted.

The clause would now read:

This Act shall come into force on September 9, 1985.

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.