

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, January 27, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PUBLIC SERVICE

SPECIAL RECRUITMENT OF FRANCOPHONES—ANNUAL REPORT—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I indicated I would give consideration to the request of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for unanimous consent to refer the report of the Public Service Commission to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates. What the government desires is a full examination of its policy on bilingualism in the Public Service by a committee. Hon. members are likely to find the reference by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre unsatisfactory for such a review. However, when the estimates are referred to the standing committees in about three weeks' time, we will undertake to facilitate an examination of this important question through the appearance of the responsible minister and other key witnesses, some of whom, I may add, may not find it possible to testify at a hearing immediately.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, does that mean the minister is denying unanimous consent to the motion I made yesterday?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, in view of the circumstances I have outlined I thought the hon. member would co-operate by withdrawing his motion.

Mr. Speaker: My understanding is that there is not unanimous consent and therefore the motion cannot be put.

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MANPOWER

RIGHT TO INFORMATION ON PERSONS SEEKING EMPLOYMENT—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43 I ask for unanimous consent to present a motion on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. It concerns the public's right to know about a matter of public concern and the denial of that right by a branch of government. Since January 21 Canada Manpower has arrogated to itself the right to refuse to release new statistical data respecting the number of persons who have applied for jobs at various Canada Manpower centres. Today such information is refused to members of this House, members of the press

and all other persons whom Canada Manpower wishes to keep in ignorance. With unanimous consent, seconded by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) I move:

• (2:10 p.m.)

That this House asserts that it is the undoubted right of Members of Parliament, members of the press and all other members of the public to receive upon request current statistical facts respecting the number of persons who are registered with Canada Manpower Centres as seeking employment.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate has proposed a motion under the terms of Standing Order 43. This motion, to be put from the Chair, requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. The motion cannot be put.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wonder whether we should give consideration to eliminating from the rules Standing Order 43 because of its obvious ineffectiveness and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I doubt whether this is a point of order. If hon. members are dissatisfied with the operation of any rule a suggestion can always be made that it be reconsidered by the Committee on Procedure and Organization. It might be worth our while to look at this rule. As hon. members know, the application of Standing Order 43 in the House during the last year or so has been rather novel. Standing Order 43 has not normally been used as it has been used during the past year or so. Actually the new method of proposing matters of urgency has supplanted to some extent the former usage under Standing Order 26. It may be that we are putting ourselves into a difficulty in relation to the use of Standing Order 43. I would think that the suggestion made by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate is a worth while one and perhaps those members of the House who represent the different parties on the committee in question might like to put this matter on the agenda of the committee when they next meet.

Mr. Lang: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I should like to bring to the attention of yourself and members of the House that the procedure by which the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate raised the question yesterday, then spoke on television and again raised the matter today can mislead not only the House but members of the public.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!