

Office of Prime Minister

In the civil war in the 1600's in England the real power of the king started to wane. Of course, in 1649 King Charles I had his head cut off, and what better example of accountability can there be? As you remember, the long parliament made the decision on Charles's fate and gained more and more power. We saw after the years of Cromwell the restoration of the monarchy with King Charles II and then King James, but royal power was never the same again. Parliament gained control over money bills and generally took a greater part in the affairs of the nation.

I suppose we saw an increase in the power of the executive in the time of King George III. For those of you who are perhaps a little rusty in British history let me say that King George III was the one king who, unfortunately, had certain physical problems that everyone thought were a mental illness. Some days he functioned, some days he did not. Of course, it would never do to run a country that way. There must be a functioning executive every day of the week, I should think. Then the cabinet started to assume powers. Lord North was the fellow who took on this mantle. He became a powerful first lord of the admiralty or first lord of the treasury.

Gradually we saw the evolution of the office of prime minister with Sir Robert Walpole. In 1910 the change was completed by the parliamentary act of 1910 or 1911 when Sir Herbert Asquith went to the king. During the constitutional crisis the king had threatened to create more peers if the House of Lords continued to impede the legislative process. Parliament gained power all the time.

Finally we come to today, in the last fifty years, we have had two world wars, an economic depression, a rapid growth in technology, and a rise in the standard of living across the world. The demands that people in Canada, and people in the western world generally, have made upon their leaders have also greatly increased. As a result, the power of government has grown. It is only natural that the powers of the executive, the cabinet, the Prime Minister, have grown too.

We should take a look at our system today in the light of what is happening on the American political scene. We saw the chief executive officer under siege in the last couple of years. It was so tough to get at him that it tore the country apart. My colleague, the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River, has shown that our Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) under our system is accessible not only to members on the government side but to members of the opposition as well. He is in the House just about every day of the week. Questions that are posed to him are ones that he does not take lightly.

A comment was made by my friend, the hon. member for Rocky Mountain. He decried the fact that today the Prime Minister and ministers appeal to the news media, the press, and that this is the way in which they get attention, not through the House. However, that is one of the facts of the cybernetic revolution, if you would like to call it that. I think what has happened to society is beneficial, because in an age of rapid growth of technology it is the media that are forcing questions. We have seen this only last week. The Prime Minister was not here of course, but we saw how the rapid change of events could be seized upon by the media, and questions from the opposition reflected what was going on outside.

[Mr. Collette.]

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but I see the clock. May I call it six o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business having expired, I do now leave the chair until eight tonight.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

IMMIGRATION ACT**AMENDMENT—MAKING IT AN OFFENCE FOR DEPORTED PERSON TO RETURN TO CANADA WITHOUT CONSENT OF MINISTER**

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration) moved that Bill S-12 from the Senate to amend the Immigration Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to set this bill before the House this evening for at least second reading, and perhaps in view of some conversations that have taken place, we might even proceed beyond that by the adjournment hour, if the disposition and will are there, to do so.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could not have agreement right now for the motion to read: "referred to a committee of the whole House". I think there would be agreement to proceed in that way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order. Hon. members have heard the suggestion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, we would agree to that arrangement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, may I express my appreciation to the House for that accommodation. It prompts me, along with an aside from across the floor, to keep my remarks as brief and non-controversial as possible. Even as short a bill as this, however, requires some explanation and elaboration. I am sure we will be able to examine it responsibly before we dispose of it this evening.

It is a very short bill and I frankly admit the proposed amendment is a measure which should have been taken