

live in to the clothes we wear, the ability to open a business, the safety of our working conditions, from what we watch on television to whether we hear about the temperature outside in Celsius or Fahrenheit degrees.

In 1980 there were some 1,164 statutory instruments registered. Up to June 30 of this year there had already been 572 registered statutory instruments. Those were only the registered statutory instruments; countless more go unregistered each year.

My purpose today is not to argue or frighten people about the extent of government involvement in our day to day lives. That is an issue perhaps for another day. Nor is my purpose to argue that it is not often both proper and necessary for Parliament to give the government a grant of power to operate without having to come back to Parliament to obtain new legislative changes. It is proper, it is appropriate and it is necessary in very many instances that this be done. The case I want to make today on behalf of the standing joint committee is that if Parliament is to continue granting vast powers to the government which will enable it to act without seeking further approval from Parliament, we have the obligation to our constituents and to the people of Canada to ensure that those powers are discharged properly, that the rights and liberties of the subjects are protected, and that there is vigilance constantly exercised over the way in which the government is doing this.

It is absolutely essential if we are to discharge our responsibilities as members of Parliament that we look very carefully at the whole issue of delegated power and how we ensure that the rights of Canadians are not diminished as a result of our increasing tendency to give these vast grants of power to the government.

• (1510)

On Friday of this week it will have been one year since I tabled in the House of Commons the fourth report of the standing joint committee. I might mention that it is typical that the committee operates by unanimity. This is a unanimous report which is representative of the feelings of members of the committee from all sides of the House of Commons and the Senate. Because of the committee's method of proceeding whereby historically we have proceeded on the basis of consensus and unanimous agreement wherever possible, the government should be giving special attention to the recommendations in this fourth report, which represents probably the single most important report on regulatory reform to be presented to Parliament in the history of Canada. It is a report which commends itself to all members of Parliament. It is one which deserves urgent attention from the government.

As I say, one year ago this Friday this report was first tabled and brought to the attention of the government. The standing joint committee was asked to study the whole process of delegated legislation and to recommend what procedures and improvements could be made.

It might be useful at this point for me simply to explain what we mean when we talk about subordinate legislation or

### *Committee Reports*

delegated legislation. Increasingly as we read legislation which is tabled in Parliament, we find that the government has also included clauses which give it power to make regulations to put into effect the policies contained in the legislation and to make those regulations some time after the legislation has been passed. It does so without having to come back to Parliament to ask for changes in the legislation.

All delegated legislation draws its authority from Parliament. It draws its authority from a specific statute, unless it is made under the Royal prerogative, which is very uncommon. Consequently, when the government is given by Parliament carte blanche authority to regulate in a particular area, it is essential that we have procedures in place which protect Canadian rights and liberties and ensure that Parliament has not simply given up its responsibility to exercise proper scrutiny over the rights of all Canadians.

When we recognize the fact that this Parliament has powers extending even to the life and death of Canadians, to questions relating to war and peace, and to whether or not Canadians should have jobs or homes of their own, we realize that our obligation as members of Parliament to oversee the discharge of those powers is very important indeed. If we fall down on the job, if we do not discharge that oversight properly and simply grant power to government where there is not proper scrutiny and when Canadian rights are not protected, then we render Parliament irrelevant and do a serious injustice to the people we are here to represent.

As I debate this report, I want to pay tribute to the members of the standing joint committee because the report itself had its genesis prior to my membership on the committee. It was well under way at the time I became chairman of the committee. I want to express my thanks to each of the members of the committee who contributed so much in terms of drafting, in terms of research and in terms of trying to make this information available to the public and the Parliament of Canada, information which we feel is very important to improve Parliament's functioning and to ensure that the rights and privileges of Canadians are properly protected.

I want also to pay special tribute to Mr. Graham Eglington, who was committee counsel and whose tireless efforts were essential in our being able to present a report which I feel is excellent.

I would like also to mention that the committee stands on the shoulders of two giant former parliamentarians. One of them is well known to every member of the House of Commons. I refer to Mr. Ged Baldwin, former House leader for our party and a former House of Commons chairman of the standing joint committee. The other gentleman, who was an outstanding parliamentarian and perhaps the outstanding scholar in Canada on constitutional matters, is Dr. Eugene Forsey, a former senator. These two gentlemen did a tremendous amount to make the committee what it was, to ensure that it did its job properly and to pave the way for us to present the report which is being debated today.

I think it is appropriate that members of the committee and members of the House of Commons should ask me, as I move