

Post Office Act

This is precisely what the hon. member for Hillsborough is doing, and merely because he has not used words which the President of the Privy Council said are stereotyped his amendment should not be ruled out of order. Mr. Speaker, if we are going to be stereotyped in our approach to the type of motions we move in this house I think it will be a sorry day that we do so decide or, with due respect, that Your Honour so decides. As long as we are establishing, through any combination of words, a principle which is declaratory of an idea adverse to the principle contained in the motion, then the amendment should be accepted.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the swinging party over there, looking forward to the just society, would be most happy to see this matter considered in detail if it has all the virtues that the minister says it has.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should make it clear at the outset of these brief remarks that I have on my desk several copies of a proposed amendment which, believe it or not, is drafted in the stereotyped form referred to by the President of the Privy Council. As a matter of fact I had even shown it to the hon. member for Hillsborough in case he wanted to take it, and I indicated that if he did not propose an amendment I would pass it to the hon. member for Surrey.

In the light of all this it is obvious that if the amendment of the hon. member for Hillsborough is ruled out of order then the first member of this party who gets the floor will be moving that Bill No. C-116 be not now read a second time but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the standing committee on transport and communications. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I suppose I should be quite partisan and express the hope that you will rule this amendment out of order so that we will have a chance to move ours. However, Mr. Speaker, I do not take that course.

I think Your Honour should realize that these two proposed amendments say precisely the same thing. They say it in different words. The forms are a little different but they say precisely the same thing, and would produce precisely the same result. Let me begin with the stereotyped form, the one we have ready. It says two things, first that Bill C-116 be not now read a second time and, second, that the subject matter of the bill be referred to a committee.

What does the amendment of my hon. friend from Hillsborough say? It says two things. In the first place it moves to strike out "all the words after "that", and the words in the motion after the word "that" are that the bill be read a second time. So that part of this amendment is saying precisely the same thing as mine is saying, that the bill be not now read a second time.

● (5:50 p.m.)

The second thing that the hon. member's amendment says is that the subject matter of the bill be referred for consideration to the standing committee on transport and communications. I think our form is perhaps a little better, because it is stereotyped, because it gets by the house and by the Speaker. But in the plain, practical language of this modern, swinging parliament surely there is no difference at all between what is proposed in the amendment of the hon. member for Hillsborough and what is proposed in the wording that I have here on my desk. If there is a difference, I suppose it is because my Conservative friend does not like to hit quite so hard. Its wording is a little softer. My hon. friend does not like to say that the bill be not read a second time. Instead he says, "send the matter elsewhere". It seems to have the effect of taking the present order off the order paper, just as mine does. My friend the hon. member for Hillsborough comes from the maritimes, instead of Manitoba, although he lived for a number of years in Manitoba. He is being a little softer on the minister, that is all.

Mr. Bell: He is soft because he was in Manitoba.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): There are people who disagree with that. At any rate, that is my point. The house is going to face this issue one way or another. There really is no point in wasting time on this. If this amendment is ruled out of order, I will hand this to the next New Democratic member who takes the floor, or move it myself at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: I am now in a position to give a decision on the basis of the comments made by hon. members. I, of course, have had an opportunity to study the amendment and look at precedents. I had a few minutes before the question was raised in the house at 5.30 to study the precedents and look into the matter as closely as possible in the circumstances.