

*Northwest Territories Act*

be what he described as a debate, but that the arguments put forward following the original submission by the minister should be to the negative.

Let us see what happens under circumstances of that kind. The minister is in a position to make an extended statement, and frequently that has been the occasion when he has accepted the opportunity to make a statement concerning the legislation he proposes to introduce. As I understand the argument that is being put forward, we are likely to find ourselves in a position where we do not know whether a statement is to be made then or at some later time. If on the other hand the statement is made by the minister, as the practice has been, and if Your Honour is to follow the ruling of Mr. Speaker Glen, that would continue to be a choice on the part of the minister, then we would have the extended statement prepared by the minister, handed to the press, and we would find ourselves conducting something that was not a debate at all and in which Your Honour would be constantly seeking to interpret what the members were trying to put forward. I submit we would get into a very confusing situation.

I think probably we would all be much happier if we followed the original practice in Westminster and there were no submission by the minister if there were to be no real debate. On the other hand if there is to be a submission on one side, then I submit that the debate should be a real one in which argument could be put forward by either side so that when it is tested by a vote, if that test is to come, it can be then based upon an exchange of ideas.

**Mr. Green:** If I may, I should like to make one further representation, Your Honour. I think you cannot compare the practice in the British House of Commons with the practice here. They have what is called rule 17 (1) which is found at page 17 of May's fifteenth edition, 1950, which reads as follows:

Whenever an order of the day is read for the house to resolve itself into a committee other than a committee on a bill, Mr. Speaker shall leave the chair without putting any question, and the house shall thereupon resolve itself into such committee, unless on a day on which the committee of supply stands as the first order of the day a minister of the crown moves, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair," for the purpose of enabling a motion on going into committee of supply to be moved as an amendment to that question.

And at page 748 of May that ruling is interpreted as follows:

In the case of committees of the whole house appointed in reply to a message under the Sign Manual, or on the recommendation of the crown,

[Mr. Drew.]

or to consider resolutions to which the recommendation of the crown is signified under S.O. No. 84, the Speaker leaves the chair without question put. (S.O. No. 17-(1).)

Mr. Glen dealt with that matter, and I am now reading from page 800 of *Hansard* of 1942. He said:

The resolution is on the order of proceedings for the day. I would point out that standing order 60 was passed in 1867, while standing order 38 was passed on March 22, 1927. In other words, standing order 38 is remedial to standing order 60, and I must conclude that standing order 38 must rule, and decide that the resolution before the house is debatable.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is an exceedingly important matter. I thank hon. members for having discussed it so fully. I think I should reread the discussion that took place on this subject about a week ago and should also read carefully what was said today. Probably it might meet with the wishes of hon. members if I reserved my ruling until some later time.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will go into the matter and give my ruling as soon as possible.

**Mr. St. Laurent:** It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the discussion of the point of order is now complete and that you have reserved your decision on the completed discussion.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes. That is how I feel about it. I think there has been full discussion on this matter; and I will base my decision not only on the discussion which has taken place tonight but also on that which took place about a week ago.

**Mr. Black (Cumberland):** Pending the change in the established rule, will the minister make his statement now?

**Mr. St. Laurent:** Mr. Speaker, we have given way on this subject two or three times. Would it not be well now if the minister could be allowed to make his statement in committee, and the questions could be put there? I do not know that it makes a great deal of difference.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Green:** Mr. Speaker, the government have not given way on anything. They are trying to do away with that rule. We have had no concession from them. As a matter of fact they are trying to take something away from us, we believe. I suggest the minister could make his statement now. He has it there all ready to give.

**Mr. Drew:** And is probably anxious to give it.