

Mr. Speaker, those are mere examples demonstrating that regulation authority is justified and is not undemocratic. On the contrary it is part of our institutions. Now, if we are told that the executive makes an overly generous or laxist use of that authority, we might discuss that; there are arguments for and against. But I shall remind the House that there is a principle as concerns authority, the principle that any gap tends to be filled. And why is this gap often filled through regulation? Because the House is often inadequate, inefficient and operates with such archaic rules that we cannot be really efficient and really professional in our capacity.

An hon. Member: Right on!

Mr. Lachance: Mr. Speaker, if hon. members really believe that the legislative has progressively relinquished its powers and if they are serious when they denounce it in such a motion—because a no confidence motion is a very serious matter—I urge them to get together in committee or otherwise to redefine this House as a modern institution with up-to-date rules so that it can really play its legislative function and spell out for the government the limits within which it must act. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the real issue. It is not saying: You have undemocratic regulations. It is not true. They are democratic since they emanate from a decision of this House but it is rather a matter of properly defining the framework within which they must operate.

But besides that, Mr. Speaker, and I will be finished in a few moments, I would like to remind the House that the exercise of the right to regulate operates within very specific criteria. It will be remembered that in 1971 the House passed the Statutory Instruments Act which defines in very specific terms the framework within which the process of regulation must operate, the criteria a regulation must meet to be legal and the obligation for any regulation to be in accordance with the Human Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, a section of the Treasury Board studies all regulations on a daily basis to ensure that none of them violate the provisions of the Human Rights Act. I must say that it is more than our courts were willing to do since they did not accept the power they were being given to exercise some discretion in the interpretation of our laws under the Human Rights Act. And without going further into this, Mr. Speaker, the government deserves to be commended for setting up this review mechanism within the Privy Council. And that is not all, Mr. Speaker. For some time already in certain statutes—and I am referring in particular to new legislation such as the regulations relating to the Motor Vehicles Act, for example, or the Clean Air Act, or the Anti-Pollution Act—all those recently enacted statutes contain a mechanism providing for the publication of the regulations to allow the public to make its views known to the government on the effects such regulations might have.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, last December the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras) announced that from now on a new system involving the socio-economic analysis and impact of any regulation would be implemented under which

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any regulation involving expenditures or a major social or economic impact would be reviewed. The results of that examination would then be published in the *Canada Gazette* giving interested organizations a period of 60 days in which to make their opinions known to the agency involved, to make representations and thus ensure more enlightened regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here to stick up for the regulations put out by the government. I am merely attempting to define the framework within which clause 2 of the motion of the official opposition must be considered. Once again, the big question, as the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) said so well, the question is not so much to complain about the number of regulations promulgated by the government, as that of ensuring that they respect the spirit of the law which confers upon the executive the authority to issue them and of working towards the future, as the President of the Treasury Board said this afternoon, by reforming the standing orders of the House and making the legislative body more efficient, more critical and more pertinent, thus better circumscribing the authority and the scope of the executive. That is the big question, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, the motion of the opposition does not touch upon that aspect of the situation which really is of prime importance for both our institutions and our country.

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[*English*]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, this has been a very interesting debate. A good many sensible things have been said, and they have been said from both sides of the House. I like, in particular, the appeal that has been made by some of the members of the official opposition for means whereby we can scrutinize more carefully the expenditures of government and have an opportunity to review programs. I also like the same sentiment as we have heard it from the other side of the House by members of the government, who have suggested that when things are not right the course to follow is not to throw out a program but to see what can be done to correct it. So, sir, I think it has been a useful day that we have spent on this motion.

In a few moments, however, we shall be called upon to cast a vote. We are not being asked to vote on the sensible things that may have been said from either side of the House; we are being asked to vote on a specific motion. The motion is a lengthy one. No matter what one picks out, somebody is likely to say, "Didn't you notice line so and so?"

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the essence of this motion is found in the words, "... that action be taken to reduce the scope . . . of government activity in Canadian society . . ." My hon. friends to the right are trying to say that this is a motion of new ideas. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) has been congratulated for putting forward something that is new. There is nothing in the whole motion that is new; no forward steps are proposed. Everything in this motion calls for cutting back, cutting out, or discontinuing something that government is doing. It is all summed up in those words that I have already