

NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES ACT.

Mr. McCARTHY. I beg to move that Bill (No. 27) further to amend the Act respecting the North-West Territories Act be set down for second reading on Monday next. I desire to explain, after the vote taken last night, why I make the motion. I had intended, at some stage of the debate, to speak on the question, and I understood, in fact I was informed by many hon. gentlemen, that other hon. members also desired to speak on it as well. My principal object in moving this motion, however, is to direct attention to the practice which prevails in this House, without in the slightest degree intending to cast any imputation on you, Mr. Speaker, as to the manner in which the question was put on this occasion, and indeed on other occasions. One side of the House cried "carried" and the other side "lost," and you, Mr. Speaker, announced from your place, without putting the question, and calling for the yeas and nays, that the nays had it. That, of course, properly speaking, put an end to all opportunity for debate. That being done, in order that the yeas and nays might be recorded, I called for the yeas and nays. I think the proper practice, and it is the English practice, that the question being put by you, Mr. Speaker, from the Chair, you should call for the yeas and then call for the nays, and then declare whether the yeas or nays had it, and it is on appeal from that decision that the yeas and nays are called for. The House would then have the fullest opportunity of knowing when the question was being put, and not, as last night, be taken by surprise.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. For one, I am not able to concur in the adoption of this motion, to-day. I think the House fully understood, when the question was put last night, that the principle of the Bill was being voted on, and in relation to a public measure, as this is, it is a very unusual course to adopt such a motion. As regards what took place last night, I feel bound to say that, to my mind, the Chair showed unusual deliberation in putting the question. It struck me when the question was called for, and when both sides of the House called either "carried" or "lost," that you, Mr. Speaker, must have been under the impression that a discussion would take place, otherwise you would not have deliberated so long as you did in announcing what you thought was the result of the division. I, therefore, feel bound to say that I think the Chair cannot rest under any charge of undue expedition.

Mr. DENISON. I intended to have said a few words last night, but, as many hon. members will recollect, there is one hour allowed for private Bills, and as the question was called not more than 15 or 20 minutes after eight o'clock, I and many other hon. members were taken by surprise.

Mr. McMULLEN. Since the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) placed the Bill on the Order Paper it has been called in this House not less than three or four times. It was called when he was present, it was allowed to stand, I presume at his request, from time to time, and eventually, at the eleventh hour last night, the Bill was called. We are now reaching the last stages of the session. It is a question that will cause considerable discussion, and for my part I am not disposed to vote to reinstate it this session.

Mr. McCARTHY.

Mr. McCARTHY. My particular object, as I stated, was to have an understanding, and I think it is well we should have it as to how questions are to be put from the Chair. As it seems to be against the general feeling of the House, I do not desire to press this motion. I quite realize now, that it would be the occasion of very great inconvenience to have a discussion upon this question this session, but I thought it only due to my friends who desire to speak on either side, and also to myself, to draw attention to the fact that we were taken by surprise. I do not desire at all to impute any want of courtesy to you, Mr. Speaker, or to say that you did not give us time. There was plenty of opportunity, that is quite certain, for any gentleman here who desired to speak. At the same time I think I am quite within the mark when I say, as I do say, that I for one was taken by surprise when you declared that the "nays" had it, and I think other gentlemen were in the same position.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Just allow me to mention one circumstance which took place when the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) was not in the House: as completely meeting, I think, the hon. gentleman's impression that the advocates of the Bill were taken by surprise. The Bill was called at a quarter to six, before recess, and the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) rose to discuss it; but at his request we all agreed to call it six o'clock, in order that any gentleman wishing to speak in favour of the Bill might get a full hearing, and might know that the Bill was to come up at eight o'clock.

Mr. LAURIER. I would remind the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) that on this occasion it was exactly as it was two years ago, when he introduced his Bill with regard to the French language. At that time, he expounded his Bill on the first reading, and on the second reading he moved it without speech, exactly as he did yesterday. Mr. Speaker gave ample opportunity last night to any one who desired to speak on the Bill.

Mr. McCARTHY. No doubt.

Mr. LAURIER. I think two or three minutes elapsed at least before the Speaker said: "Call in the members."

Mr. BECHARD. Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) was wrong in saying that he was taken by surprise. I was in my seat when the Bill was called, and when the motion for the second reading was put everybody was looking for the hon. member to rise and make a speech, but he was one of the first to call "yeas" and "nays." It was after that, that hon. gentlemen said "call in the members," and you, Mr. Speaker, gave the order to call in the members after a few minutes had elapsed.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I understand the rule to be that where a Bill is voted down, and not postponed to any future date, that it can be put on the Order Paper again by the hon. gentleman who has charge of it if he sees proper; and it is not a question of order at all. If the hon. gentleman wishes to put his Bill on the Order Paper, I suppose there is nothing in the rules to prevent him. There is no doubt whatever, it seems to me, that there was ample opportunity given for hon. gentlemen who wished to speak. Mr. Speaker