

Post Office Act

deal with the principal question before the house at the moment, whether or not the bill shall be read a second time.

• (5:40 p.m.)

I suggest that if the hon. member had wished to achieve the result of having a committee study the subject matter included in the bill he should have moved his amendment in the well established form that has been provided in the rules. He has not chosen to do so. He has moved it in a form which fails to deal with the question before us, whether there shall be second reading or not. For that reason, and since he has failed to adopt one of the recognized procedures of the house, I suggest that the amendment should not be accepted in this form. I submit it is not in order and should be rejected for that particular reason.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, when the President of the Privy Council used the word "stereotyped" it confirmed my suspicion that, despite all the whining and whimpering we have heard about our objections to the question period, this is really a government which is very reactionary in respect of its approach to the rules.

I would like to draw Your Honour's attention to page 396 of the fourth edition of *Beauchesne*. There are provided there a number of precedents to use which I have been following for some time, as have other hon. members, secure in the thought that these had been disclosed as suitable vehicles by which amendments could be moved. I point to form No. 93 which is as follows:

The question being proposed "That Bill No. intituled an Act be now read a second time";

Mr. moves in amendment thereto that all the words after "that" in the said motion be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"The further consideration of this bill be deferred until the principle thereof has, by means of a referendum, been submitted to and approved of by the electors of Canada."

Despite all the defects which my hon. friend from Hillsborough has discerned in this bill we are not suggesting that it should be submitted to the electors of Canada, but for the reasons we have given we think it should be submitted to a committee of this house. All we are doing is following a precedent which appears in *Beauchesne* and which apparently has been followed in the past. I use that as the first approach to argue with you, sir, that the amendment should be acceptable.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

Second, as the President of the Privy Council has said, a practice has been followed from time to time of referring the subject matters of bills to a committee, but in so doing they lose their place in the order of business. I hope that our committee on procedure will be able to amend that so as to permit them to retain their place. However, we must accept the rules as they are. It is the practice that the subject matter of a bill may be referred to a standing committee, after the use of the usual words "that it be not now read a second time," but I suggest there is no difference between that and what the hon. member for Hillsborough has suggested.

The words "that it be not now read a second time" are surely the equivalent of the words "that consideration be deferred," and the words "that consideration be deferred" have been sanctified by their appearance in *Beauchesne*. In addition the amendment contains a principle declaratory of some adverse view to the one contained in the motion proposed by the Postmaster General. I am reinforced in my view of that by an examination of *Beauchesne*, citation 386:

On the second reading of a bill, the house may decide to refer the subject matter thereof to a commission although the bill could not be referred to a committee of the house before its second reading. (The subject matter of a bill and the bill itself are two different things.) On the 17th April, 1934, the following amendment was moved to the second reading of a bill to amend the Railway Act in respect of rates on grain: "That the bill be not now read a second time but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada." This amendment was as much a declaration of policy as if it stated that the question of adjusting the railway rates on grain should be investigated by the railway board.

This is precisely what the hon. member for Hillsborough is now saying, that it is a declaration of policy that the various details and issues involved in this bill should be investigated by the standing committee, precisely as was indicated by the decision, if my memory serves me right, of Mr. Speaker Black in 1934.

I am reinforced in this view by citation No. 332 in *Beauchesne's* fourth edition:

It is also competent to a member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a bill, to move as an amendment to the question, a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the bill, or expressing opinions as to any circumstances connected with its introduction—