

Post Office Act

Our arguments are very simple and not very much inspired by the law but by plain common sense. We feel that the passing of Bill No. C-113 entitled: An Act to amend the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act is very urgent as compared to the Post Office bill which no one wants to see passed.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I thank hon. members for the expression of their views. Unfortunately, I do not think it is possible for the Chair to accept the motion proposed by the hon. member. It is true that the standing order referred to by the hon. member must be taken into account, but we must also take into account other standing orders, and particularly standing order 18(2) which reads:

Except as provided in standing orders 43 and 56, government orders may be called in such sequence as the government may think fit.

There are a number of other precedents that I might bring to the attention of hon. members. There is one precedent that is entirely on point. On that occasion a motion was brought under the standing order to move from one government order to another government order. The matter was not, as the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka said, a proposal to move from a government order to a private member's order.

I refer hon. members to the *Journals* of the House of Commons, 1966, page 543, where the following is to be found:

And the question being again proposed,—That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair for the house to resolve itself into committee of the whole to consider a certain proposed resolution—

Mr. Fulton, seconded by Mr. Blair, moved,—That the House do proceed to another order, namely No. 12.

Mr. Speaker ruled as follows:

May I point out to the honourable Member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton), that I cannot accept his motion because the order that is now before the house is a government order, and the other order that the honourable member now considers we should proceed with is order No. 12, which is another government order, and government orders may be moved only by the leader of the house. I would refer honourable members to standing order 18(2).

There is also citation 136, which reads:

● (3:50 p.m.)

"All motions referring to the business of the house should be introduced by the leader of the house."

By virtue of standing order 18(2) the government has full jurisdiction over its own orders.

Standing order 18(2) reads:

"Except as provided in standing order 56, government orders may be called in such sequence as the government may think fit."

Therefore, I cannot accept the honourable member's motion.

In view of this precedent—and in the circumstances this is the only one which I thought was necessary to bring to the attention of hon. members—I regret I cannot put to the house the motion proposed by the hon. member.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): May I rise to seek Your Honour's guidance in this matter? Does Your Honour consider, then, that while standing order 44, which is binding on this house, does indicate that a motion may be made without notice to transfer from one item of business to another, that this is a prerogative of a minister of the crown in the light of the wording of standing order 18(2) to which Your Honour referred?

Mr. Speaker: The point raised by the hon. member is a point of argument which might have been raised before I made my ruling. I can only tell the hon. member that there is a standing order, 18(2), which binds the Chair and all hon. members, and that there are precedents by which I feel bound. I have quoted one of these precedents, and I have also quoted the standing order. There may be, to some extent, a discrepancy between the two standing orders; but in the light of previous rulings I have no alternative but to accept the interpretation which has been placed on these two rules by past Speakers.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the amendment which is now before the house, that this bill to amend the Post Office Act, Bill No. C-116, be referred to a committee.

It is very difficult for me, and, I am sure for many other hon. members in this house as well as Canadians generally, to understand why a bill as important as this should not be referred to a committee. These proposals will affect everyone who buys a postage stamp. They directly affect many businesses, large and small. They affect all the publishing companies in this country, and there are many questions to be answered. I realize that the minister has provided all members with what we call a white paper outlining a good deal of the information. I also realize that many hon. members have been presented with briefs on this subject, and that the minister himself has received representations. However, there are