

*Government Organization*

have the opportunity of presenting argument to Your Honour, but I believe we do have that right and I am glad that Your Honour sees it the same way.

It is quite clear that under standing order 59(4) it is in order for an hon. member to appeal a ruling from the Chairman to Mr. Speaker. Nevertheless once Your Honour has ruled, that ruling cannot be appealed to the house. I should therefore like Your Honour to give consideration to the arguments which I advanced when we were in committee of the whole, in response to the points raised by the Chairman of the committee of the whole.

It was suggested that the amendment I moved, which seeks to enlarge the written powers of the department of the registrar general, was not relevant to the clause. I argued, Mr. Speaker, that clause 8 spells out the duties, powers and functions of the department of the registrar general. There is already in the bill as drafted reference to such things as combines, mergers, monopolies and restraint of trade, not forgetting such things as patents, copyrights and trade marks, all of which have a bearing on consumer affairs.

I also sought to point out when we were in committee of the whole that the Prime Minister in his speech on second reading, and the President of the Privy Council today in committee of the whole, alleged and even claimed that there is at least some provision in the composition of this department for dealing with consumer affairs.

I suggest therefore that far from this matter being irrelevant to the clause, it is highly relevant to pin down the duties, powers and functions of the registrar general, and to make it clear that these duties, powers and functions include the possibility of reviewing prices and looking at all matters of interest to consumers.

The second point that the Chairman drew to our attention was a very well known rule with which I am very familiar and which I have often quoted, to the effect that one cannot by an amendment reopen a matter on which a decision has been taken.

The Chairman was of the opinion that an amendment we moved to clause 6 of the bill, which had been voted down not many minutes before, was the same in substance as the amendment that I proposed to clause 8.

● (7:50 p.m.)

I submit this is not the case. The chairman said that whatever the wording of the [Mr. Knowles.]

amendment to clause 6 may have been the discussion ranged all round it. Well, Your Honour knows this often happens—discussion gets all over the waterfront. But when it came to a vote, what we were voting on was a very clear and limited proposition, namely that the name of the department be changed to the department of consumer affairs and that the title of the minister be changed to minister of consumer affairs. There was no suggestion in the amendment to clause 6 as to what the functions of the renamed department might be. We had no right to do so on clause 6. The only thing we could do was to deal with the name. And this is all that was done in the amendment moved by my hon. friend from Vancouver-Kingsway. I suggest that however far afield the discussion may have ranged, the decision with regard to clause 6 was to turn down a suggestion for a change of name.

The third point the Chair used in ruling my amendment out of order was that it was inconsistent with a decision already taken. It seems to me that in this respect it is worth while looking at the ruling Your Honour gave on May 24 with respect to the way in which this whole piece of legislation was brought before us.

Your Honour will recall, because you indicated it took a great deal of study to reach this decision, that it was your opinion that so long as a resolution gave the intent of the bill which was to follow, and no new financial obligations were imposed, it was appropriate for the government, in the wording of the bill, to bring in anything which was consistent with that purpose. The particular case in point was that no reference had been made in the resolution to the department of forestry and rural development, whereas in the bill itself a number of clauses referred to this department. Your Honour suggested this was only a change in name and that it was not out of line with the intent or purpose set out in the resolution.

I submit to you very strongly—indeed I put it to you as an appeal—that if the government had the right in the bill to include things which were not mentioned in the resolution but which were in line with the intent of the resolution, this right ought to extend to other members of the house whether on the government side or on the opposition side.

What we have proposed is in keeping with the intent of the resolution and the intent of the legislation, namely the reorganization of the departments of the government and the