

this House for a long time that no member can question a minister on anything outside his own area of responsibility? If that is the case, the Minister of Labour refused to answer a direct question involving Unemployment Insurance Commission benefits, by referring it to the Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion, and it has nothing to do with that minister.

An hon. Member: It does.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is my suggestion that we will become involved in a debate between the minister and the hon. member. I think this may very well be the subject of an interesting debate, but it cannot be raised at this time on a question of privilege. I think this is the kind of situation which should be resolved in another way, perhaps by direct discussion between the minister and the hon. member.

Mr. MacInnis: I have a further point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There is no question of privilege and the hon. member is seeking to pursue the matter further by way of a point of order. There is really not a valid point of order. Orders of the day.

• (3:00 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

CANADA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PROVISION FOR ESTABLISHMENT, OBJECTS, POWERS,
CAPITALIZATION, ETC.

On the Order:

January 25, 1971—Second reading in reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs of Bill C-219, an Act to establish the Canada Development Corporation—the Minister of Finance.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, some time ago, on a point of order, I filed an oral caveat in respect of this bill in the expectation that there was a point which ought to be discussed in order to give the Chair an opportunity to examine the precedents and in order to give other hon. members, including the Government House Leader, the same opportunity. It deals very simply with the question of whether this is a hybrid bill, whether the procedure employed to introduce such bills is proper, whether we must change our procedure in future with regard to the carriage of these bills, and what will be the consequences if, in fact, this bill is declared by the House and Your Honour to be a hybrid bill.

The subject is a novel one. It has not had too much discussion in the House, but as I see the picture, we are now getting into a stage where this kind of bill may well be presented repeatedly in the future. It is about time we considered this possibility and laid down our practice. I am reinforced in this case by what Your Honour said on January 26 when dealing with a point of order raised by

Canada Development Corporation

my colleague, the hon. member for Halifax-East-Hants (Mr. McCleave) in connection with the government organization bill. Your Honour pointed out very properly something which we on this side of the House have always felt was so, but which the government people seem to have forgotten. Your Honour stated that a government bill is subject to the same rules, criteria and examination, and can be subject to the same difficulties as private bills. You also indicated that this matter should be raised before second reading.

The question of what is a hybrid bill is something which has engaged the attention of the United Kingdom House. As it may be a rather strange and foreign word the hon. members, I am going to briefly indicate what is a hybrid bill, why this bill should be considered as such, and if so what the consequence will be. In the United Kingdom, because of the fact there have been socialistic and capitalistic governments replacing each other over the years, especially since the 1920's, there have been many bills dealing with nationalization, renationalization and denationalization. In addition to that, the Parliament of the United Kingdom operates in a unitarian state and consequently questions relating to many matters and the operation of the rules dealing with hybrid bills are raised more frequently.

Because there have been a great many precedents going back over the years on this issue, the House of Commons at Westminster established a committee in 1948 which reported on February 14, 1949. This report was the subject of a very interesting debate in the House at that time. In order to set the foundation for this argument, I just want to take the time to read one or two extracts from that report. It was introduced by the Lord President of the Council, Mr. Morrison, later Lord Morrison, now deceased. He said:

The Report which we are inviting the House to approve is really a piece of Parliamentary spring cleaning, and the dusty corner we want to start to sweep out is our procedure for handling hybrid Bills on the Committee stage—

He goes on to say:

—that is, those Bills which are public Measures but which also affect private interests in such a way that we apply to them our Standing Orders and procedure relating to private business.

We have had before us in the last few years quite a number of hybrid Bills, some important, some relatively unimportant; and I have no doubt that more will be needed in years to come.

That was a socialist philosophy and I am not saying that disparagingly. I see that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) was about to rise when I used those words.

Then the lord president of the council went on to state, after reciting a long list of bills which fall within the category of hybrid bills and in respect of which the special procedure was invited and in fact required:

The hybrid Bill is somewhere half-way between the ordinary public Bill and the private Bill, and so it is not very surprising that the procedure we recommend the House to adopt lies somewhere half-way between the two forms of practice which I have just described.