

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES OF MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

#### SUGGESTED CHANGE IN STANDING ORDERS TO PERMIT RECORDED VOTE

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River)** moved:

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization review Standing Orders dealing with Private Members' Public Bills with a view to making a report to the House with a recommendation that such changes be made as will allow a recorded vote on some of such bills.

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I launch into the few remarks I want to make, I wish to point out that while the motion which I have placed before the House is of fairly limited application, if there is a disposition on the part of hon. members and the House generally to think that there is a good case to be made for a review of the principles and the Standing Orders under which we now deal with Private Members' Public Bills, I would be quite prepared to consent to any form of change or amendment which might mean that the whole subject of Private Members' Public Bills could be considered by the Standing Committee.

I am reinforced in my view on that because last session, during the course of an exchange, Your Honour had occasion at one time to refer to this problem and to indicate that it might well be a subject of discussion for the committee. I am always glad to call upon profound authorities to support my views. Mind you, I do not always agree with profound authorities but most of the time I do. I recognize that without the co-operation of the government members this matter will simply be discussed briefly now and vanish into thin air, possibly to be revised at some other time. Speaking generally, Mr. Speaker, may I say that I have a great belief in the contribution that individual members may make to this House through their proposed recommendations. What I have to say now is said without animosity and is a general statement, but it is because governments tend to stupidity, to deceit and procrastination that the affairs of mankind move slowly. I make these observations with regard to all governments, the aggregation of people. I realize that in the very nature of government this must happen, but it is because of the capacity of individuals to do better things that mankind moves at all. It is in that sense that I feel there is an opportunity in this House for private members to do much to improve the role of this House of Commons in dealing with the problems of society.

● (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, let us not delude ourselves. Today in this country, as in others where there are legislative groups which meet and which constitute a forum for the debate of the problems of the people they represent, there has been an increasing feeling of the irrelevancy and the failure of these legislative assemblies to do the work for which they were designed. I do not agree with this

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altogether, but there is enough substance to it to give us all fear and grounds for concern.

Certainly, the opportunity for the private member to make proposals which can be advanced to the stage where a decision can be made in this House, is slight. These proposals may deal with people who are racially disinherited, the economically deprived, the young, people who suffer from inequality of any kind. There is a feeling amongst many of these people that Parliament does not faithfully produce, in a form which is acceptable to them, an opportunity to discuss, to debate and to decide. I am sure that in the United States there must be the same feeling with regard to their Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I think my motion has a remedy for this situation and I ask the House to look at it carefully. At present I have this hour available, and tomorrow there will be another hour devoted to some other aspect of a private member's business. This is a useful means of bringing forward subjects for discussion but it is highly unsatisfactory in that it does not provide that at least some of them may be brought to a stage where a decision is made. This does not necessarily mean a decision binding upon the government—I do not seek that—but an opportunity where the government may feel that what is proposed is acceptable to them; securing a decision of this House and possibly of the Parliament. There is a desperate need to do something about this, Mr. Speaker. I am not charging hon. members, but there is a measure of over-all hypocrisy in our approach to private members business. I hope we can do something about this and I have some suggestions to offer.

If we are to make ourselves useful, relevant and believable, we must make some provision in this House for a meaningful debate so that the people I have mentioned will have their day in court, that court being the court of Parliament, the greatest court of last resort in this country. Though I might feel that what I bring forward on behalf of people in my constituency is a valid case, I might not be successful in persuading even my colleagues in my own party to accept it. However, I am convinced in my experience of human nature that if the case is presented well and a decision taken, these people will have had their day in court and even vicariously there will be a measure of satisfaction. This is not the case at the moment, Mr. Speaker. What I propose, of course, is only one method of achieving this type of reform; there are many others, and it might be well to look at some other jurisdictions.

In the United States, there are a great many opportunities for Senators and members of the House of Representatives to tack on to appropriation bills measures which can not only be voted on by the House or Senate, but which can carry with them a measure of spending. In other words, under the system which prevails there, it is possible to approve expenditure on a private members bill in the Senate or House of Representatives. Of course, such is impossible here because of our constitution and because under our parliamentary system the government has the responsibility with respect to the expenditure of