

Canadian Commercial Corporation Act

whether we might reach an agreement along the lines now suggested by the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis). May I ask if this could be done: Could there be an understanding that the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) would reintroduce the bill with clause 6 omitted and that it would take the position on the order paper that it now has? In other words, this would mean that the hon. member could proceed with this bill on the next day on which public bills come before the House. The hon. member probably wishes to proceed today, but I see difficulties and complications. This might be a compromise on which we could reach agreement.

Mr. Francis: That is precisely the suggestion I was making. I think there has to be a formal procedure for amending the bill now before the House. For my part, I am prepared to say that this bill should retain its place on the list and come up for discussion at the appropriate time.

Mr. Perrault: Mr. Speaker, the subject of this bill is of great concern to all members of the House. We are concerned about the subject of maternity benefits, and I for one would welcome a procedure which would enable the House to discuss the provisions of this bill at the earliest possible opportunity. I think we should attempt to remove any impediments which might exist so that the bill might be introduced in the House. I would be very content if this could be done. In other words, if the hon. member would bring in an amendment, I suggest that the bill be allowed to maintain its position at the head of the list of private members' public bills so that at the next opportunity to discuss these bills we could go ahead with it.

● (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If this is agreed, the matter will stand and the hon. member will have the opportunity to reintroduce the bill in such form as she feels would be acceptable under the rules. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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CANADIAN COMMERCIAL CORPORATION ACT**MEASURE TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DELIBERATIONS OF CROWN AGENCIES**

On the order:

Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of Bill C-7, an act to amend the Canadian Commercial Corporation Act—Mr. Stewart (Cochrane).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Before the hon. member addresses himself to the matter before the House I would enter the same reservation as I did with respect to the bill we have just dealt with, sponsored by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). The

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

bill sponsored by the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) may be somewhat more sophisticated in respect of the provisions of Standing Order 62; in other words, I do not think it is quite as obvious. But I am prepared to hear argument from the hon. member sponsoring the bill and from all hon. members who would like to address themselves to the point.

It seems to me that the bill will have the effect of creating a charge or impost on the public treasury, and of course the recommendation required is not available. Therefore, I would ask that until I have had an opportunity to hear those members who would like to address themselves to the procedural aspect, the hon. member confine his initial remarks at least to that particular point.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): I shall speak only on the procedural aspect, Mr. Speaker. I am a little surprised that this question is raised at this time, because if anything has been said in latter days regarding private members' bills, or public bills as they are called, certainly one criticism levelled at me was not that it was not procedurally correct.

So far as any charge to the treasury is concerned, of course that is completely out of the question, as is obvious in the bill. It says in very plain terms: "One of the members other than the president may be a Member of Parliament". It does not purport to add another member to the board, and in that case add any expense to the treasury in the event he would have to be displaced from one place to the other and have his expenses paid. Therefore, that Member of Parliament would simply be replacing any other member who may be appointed to the board of directors. So as far as the procedural aspect is concerned, frankly I am at a loss to understand why this question should have been raised.

Mr. Francis: Mr. Speaker, having looked at this bill, it seems to me that there are two possible points that can be raised in regard to it. The first is whether an additional charge is placed on the treasury by the terms of the bill. I have heard the explanation of the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart), who argues that the bill merely seeks to say that within the terms in which any Crown corporation would name its board of directors, one of them would be a Member of Parliament. There would be no increase in the total remuneration paid by that corporation and there would be no additional charge on public funds. In that respect it seems to me that this bill is beyond question within the terms of private members' bills which are permitted to be considered by the House.

The second question which should be raised is the possible conflict between the Senate and House of Commons Act. As members of the House are perfectly aware, that act prohibits members of the House from accepting remuneration in right of the Crown in any other employment or in other terms. These are broad and sweeping terms indeed. The question that has to be decided by hon. members is whether the terms of the bill as it is drafted would in fact resolve any possible conflict with the other piece of legislation.