

Harbour Commissions Act

population and let us give this nation the possibility to bloom and give this country many, true Canadians. At this rate, a calamity is threatening to put our genuine Canadians definitely in a state of minority mainly because of the low birthrate. It is really discouraging to realize that, from 1950 to 1972, that is to say over a 22 year period, the birthrate for Quebec has fallen from 30.3 per cent to 15.2 per cent per 1,000 habitants. Presently, the birthrate, mainly in Quebec—

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member will not mind if I interrupt his speech at this point. It being five o'clock, pursuant to special order made earlier this day, it is my duty to interrupt proceedings now before the House. Debate on the motion for second reading of the bill will be resumed at the next sitting. I would also remind hon. members that there will be no late show tonight.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private member's business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills, private bills and notices of motions.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Reid) on a point of order.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I think there would be agreement to take Order No. 6 standing in the name of the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the suggestion by the hon. parliamentary secretary agreed to that we proceed to discussion of Bill C-39?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

● (1700)

[English]

HARBOUR COMMISSIONS ACT

AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE FOR MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION ON COMMISSIONS

Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta) moved that Bill C-39, to amend the Harbour Commissions Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to provide for the election of capable and qualified people to positions on the Harbour Commissions by electors of the local municipalities involved. I wish to begin by saying this bill is in no way intended to be disparaging of the people who are already appointed as harbour commissioners in the area. In most cases they are doing a good job. They are doing the job the people want done in the area. I would also have nothing against this bill being amended in the committee to allow some appointments to the board if the government thought it necessary.

[Mr. Allard.]

I believe the important point in respect of this bill is the input by the people of the community. I do not intend to take very long, Mr. Speaker. In fact I am just about finished. I know what the people of my area want. They want some elected officials on the Harbour Commission. Therefore, I intend to make a short speech. The last time I did so someone on the other side suggested that there must not have been very much I could have said. The people in my area decided to support this principle not only by electing me but by electing people on my left and around me who support this principle. I suggest to government members that instead of spending the 55 minutes remaining in talking out this bill they should send it to the committee to ensure that we arrive at a better method of selecting harbour commissions than we have now.

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I should like to support what the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds) has just said. I have an odd reservation about the bill but I think it is most important that this bill be referred to the committee. There has already been an attempt in this house by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) to accomplish a similar objective. In that instance this House saw fit to allow that bill to go to the committee. I think at that time members made a very wise decision because this enabled the issue to be raised again.

The issue is that under the present Harbour Commissions Act the people who live in the area of the harbours concerned are disgusted and disturbed about the way in which the organization of harbours is proceeding. The most active groups, such as the environmental groups, are not being consulted in respect of the way in which the harbours are being developed. A committee must have a look at the way in which harbours are being developed. The most important function of a harbour can be recreation for the citizens of the community. The reason I am pleased to support my hon. friend's bill is that this would give an opportunity to the people in the community to run for office.

I said that I had a reservation about the bill. The suggested new section 5(1) provides that all members of the commission be elected, although the hon. member did indicate in his remarks that he would be amenable to some amendment in this regard. I think we need a combination of elected and appointed members. The hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose) has a private member's bill which has received first reading. This bill provides for the appointment of members to the Harbour Commissions.

One of the interested groups is the environmental group. Another is fisheries and a third represents the people involved in sport. More than the commercial aspect of a river and harbour is involved. Therefore, I am very pleased to support this bill. I am hopeful that the government will have second thoughts about talking it out. As my friend has said I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this area do not want this bill talked out. They want it discussed during this session.

Another reason for supporting this bill is the chaotic way in which our harbour facilities have been developed on the Pacific coast. What we really have is a good old-fashioned free enterprise system. I shall not tell you how the free enterprise competitive system is failing in this