

left without recourse. It is for these reasons that I feel this amendment is quite in order. It does not introduce any substantive matter beyond merely the procedure of reviewing the effects of a power granted under a particular provision of the legislation.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, you have asked for comments on the procedural aspects of the amendment. I agree with the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) that it lies within the power of parliament to call for a review by an appropriate body of any delegated authority which it may grant to the governor in council or indeed to any other body. I do not think the question is whether it lies within the power of parliament to adopt this but, rather, whether this particular suggestion is appropriate to the operations and principle of the bill as it now stands. Perhaps one of my colleagues will have some remarks to make on the subject of whether or not this is a substantive matter, but I wish to point out that I am concerned about two points.

First, the amendment purports to vest in a body called the "plenary session of first ministers of Canada" powers which this body does not now have. Unions of first ministers or finance ministers have no power to take or implement collective decisions. In each instance this is merely a consultative body and the decision-making process relates entirely to individual undertakings to do or not to do certain things with respect to their legislative masters. This applies to first ministers and finance ministers.

Therefore there is no procedure now, there has not been in the past, nor do I think there is any envisaged whereby this grouping, this coming together of either first ministers or finance ministers, could or should take collective decisions binding on anyone, whether by a formal vote or an informal vote, weighted or unweighted and without a very substantial reorganization, not only of the *modus operandi* but also of the purposes of meetings of first ministers and of finance ministers. I do not think this particular suggestion would work. On that ground, rather than proposing an unworkable suggestion I would hope the hon. member for Edmonton West would withdraw his amendment.

I said I was concerned about two things, Mr. Speaker. The second one is that the hon. member indicated that his purpose in doing this was to compel the government to take action in quite a different arena. This is a subject which I suggest should be tackled and settled on its own merits, without making use of this particular piece of legislation as a means of forcing the government to take action which the hon. member has suggested is urgent and necessary and which has not been approached with the speed and diligence with which he feels it should be approached.

If I understood his words correctly, he would be quite prepared not to proceed with this amendment if he were to get his view accepted by the government with respect to action in relation to another piece of legislation. In recognition of the fact that his suggestion would not work, again I suggest that the hon. member might wish to withdraw his amendment. Also, procedurally I question whether the amendment is in order, given the fact that its purpose is not merely to change the operation of this bill but really to get government action in another field.

Federal-Provincial Arrangements Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Unless other hon. members wish to make submissions on the procedural point, the Chair is prepared to rule on the procedural acceptability of the motion put before the House for its consideration. As I indicated in my initial remarks, I was not seriously concerned about the constitutional question of giving authority to a body outside of the federal authority, if I may use that term again. The hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), and, I believe, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) did not disagree with him, said that this is a question of law that is not the concern of the Chair. I raised it only in a preliminary fashion so that hon. members would have it in mind and so that if they felt I was in error in that respect they could argue the point. I need not deal further with that aspect.

The second point in my preliminary remarks concerned the substantive nature of the motion and whether it was in fact beyond the four corners of the clause of the bill that we have before us. Again, I do not think the President of the Treasury Board has any quarrel with the hon. member for Edmonton West, and indeed I have no quarrel with the hon. gentleman in this respect. I think we are in agreement that there is no question but that it lies within the power of parliament to provide for a review of regulations when it makes provision for their enactment. Of course, it is within the authority of parliament to provide for a review or check on those regulations. So I do not have any concern about that matter.

My only concern is whether or not the check or the veto, if I may call it such, which is provided for in the motion goes beyond the scope of the clause of the bill that the House has before it. The hon. member for Edmonton West argued with respect to the Statutory Instruments Act and appeared to be critical of the government on that point. I am not going to base my decision on his argument in that respect. The President of the Treasury Board indicated that if the hon. member for Edmonton West was chastising the government for its inaction in certain other areas, he should not use this particular vehicle. I agree with that.

That leaves me with the consideration of whether or not the motion before the chamber is of a substantive nature, that is, whether it goes beyond the scope of the clause that it purports to amend. It is quite a substantial change, but I am going to allow the motion because it does seem to me that while the authority respecting the veto may be substantially different than the power given to the governor in council, I would not want to say as to what degree or where a checking power, if I may use that term, a power of vetoing or checking the authority given to the governor in council goes beyond the authority contemplated in the bill. In other words, I would not want to say at what point the authority to provide a check or veto goes beyond the original thought of parliament in enacting the clause of the statute. For those reasons I shall allow the amendment. The motion has been put to the chamber and it is not necessary for me to read it again unless hon. members wish me to do so. It is before the chamber for debate.

• (2050)

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I shall not impose on the House much longer. Arising out of the discussion we have had, I should like to say that the purpose of my amendment is that any negative resolution,