

Motion for Concurrence in Report

area in the member's riding, was not that of asking for a statement of opinion on a matter of government policy; it was again a procedural motion and, to give the committee an opportunity to discuss the matter, the motion was carried.

I argue that both these motions were of an entirely procedural nature. They did not involve the discussion of a substantive question, raising questions of underlying policy. On that basis, neither of the two precedents should be regarded as restricting you, Mr. Speaker, in your decision. I therefore argue that this being, if not the first time this question has been discussed certainly the first time in recent years, you should have an opportunity now to make a decision.

An hon. Member: Shoot down the committees.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I invite Your Honour to make a decision in favour of the House being able effectively to plan the way it will carry on business from day to day. I would therefore ask, Mr. Speaker, that the motion put by the hon. member, being a private members' notice of motion, not be dealt with at this point but be transferred to the appropriate place under the Orders of the Day so that it may be discussed in due course.

An hon. Member: There is not much support for that decision.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to speak to this point of order, which has been raised by the government House leader, because I think it involves a very important question for Your Honour's consideration.

I should like first of all to deal briefly with the whole question which has been adverted to by the minister from time to time. I think the point concerns the type of motion being made, and it relates to the type of report being considered. The hon. member for Athabasca, as a member of this committee, is entitled to base a motion on a statement contained in the report which reads:

Your committee recommends that the government of Canada indicate to the world, without delay, that vessels, surface and submarine, passing through Canada's Arctic Archipelago are and shall be subject to the sovereign control and regulation of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Baldwin: That statement does not ask the government to involve itself in the expense [Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

diture of money; it asks the government to get off its iceberg and make a statement on what should be done about Canada's Arctic North. If we are not to move farther in the direction of a presidential form of government, members of the House, and particularly government members as well as those in opposition, must have the right to seize the initiative when the government has failed to do so and put certain types of motions. Because a very important principle is involved I should like to quote from the Standing Orders of the House, beginning with Standing Order 57 which reads

Whenever a resolution is reported from any Committee of the Whole, a motion to concur in the same shall be forthwith put and decided without debate or amendment.

I ask Your Honour to take note of the mandatory wording, "shall be forthwith put and decided". It may appear that if that rule were to be complied with there could be no debate. May I, therefore, also read standing Order 32(1)(b), which says:

The following motions are debatable:
Every motion:

(b) for the concurrence in a report of a standing or special committee;

Finally, to complete an examination of pertinent Standing Orders, may I read standing order 65(10) which reads:

In a standing or special committee, the standing orders of the House shall be observed so far as may be applicable, except the standing orders as to the seconding of motions, limiting the number of times of speaking and the length of speeches.

Clearly, the Standing Orders indicate that in committee proceedings you apply the same procedures as are applicable in the House, so far as they may be brought into effect. Consequently, when the committee of the whole House makes a report, according to the Standing Orders of the House that report shall—not may—be subject to a motion of concurrence. I submit Your Honour must consider the Standing Orders I have cited in deciding whether or not a motion to concur must be put. That begs the question, of course, as to who shall be entitled to put the motion.

May I also refer Your Honour to Bourinot's Parliamentary Procedure, Fourth Edition, which provides at page 477 as follows:

It is the practice to move concurrence in the reports of committees in certain cases. For instance, the reports on printing are invariably agreed to, as they contain recommendations for the printing and distribution of documents, which must be duly authorized by the house—Also reports containing certain opinions or resolutions are frequently concurred in on motion—