

Public Service

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: The question cannot be put.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF CHAIRMAN OF
COMMISSION—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO
MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, under the terms of Standing Order 43 I propose a motion on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity, one which is of interest to all members of the House.

The Chairman of the Public Service Commission is presently being used willingly as a tool of those in government who seek to subvert the merit system in the service and institute in its place hiring practices based on race, language—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows there have been a number of rulings that Standing Order 43 cannot be used for the purpose of making allegations which, by virtue of the nature of the Standing Order, cannot be answered. The hon. member can indicate why there is urgency, why we should dispense with the notice requirement imposed in the usual course by our Standing Orders, and then state the terms of his proposed motion. He cannot argue, or make allegations or accusations.

Mr. Alkenbrack: With all respect, Mr. Speaker, I am only giving reasons for the motion, as has been done before.

Mr. Speaker: I do not wish to debate with the hon. member, but he will appreciate that the Chair is placed in a very difficult position. I have suggested on other occasions to hon. members that Standing Order 43 should be used only in special circumstances. Standing Order 43 is there for the exclusive purpose of putting into the hands of individual members of the House an instrument whereby they can dispense with the 48-hour notice period which is ordinarily imposed on the government and others for the protection of the House and of all hon. members. When hon. members think that this protection should not be available in special circumstances, the motion can be put. But the Standing Order should not be used as a vehicle to argue a case, to make submissions or to make allegations which, because of the very nature of the Standing Order, remain on the record and to which no opportunity for a reply is provided.

Mr. Alkenbrack: My remarks will be explanatory, Mr. Speaker. I am coming to the motion itself. The Chairman of the Public Service Commission has in many cases played outright favouritism.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Alkenbrack: He has brought the high office of Chairman of the Public Service Commission under a cloud—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Selkirk rises on a point of order.

Mr. Rowland: I rise on a point of order to ask your advice, Mr. Speaker. Is any protection afforded by this House to a public servant against unprincipled attacks upon him to which he has no right of reply?

Mr. Speaker: That is obviously the point the Chair was making a moment ago. I really do not know how we can deal with a situation such as this when an individual from either side of the House, or from any party, seeks to move a motion under Standing Order 43 which contains allegations and accusations against, for example, another hon. member, or a member of the government, or against a civil servant high or low. The motion being under Standing Order 43, there is no possibility of anyone replying. I suppose there is always another side to any story or proposition. I think there is obviously something wrong from a parliamentary standpoint when an hon. member standing in his place makes an accusation which cannot be debated or considered under the terms of the Standing Order. I really have very serious doubts as to whether that can be done.

• (2:50 p.m.)

Mr. Alkenbrack: I am coming to my motion, Mr. Speaker. I expect it will be debated very soon. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Code):

That this House do press the government to take steps to remove Mr. John Carson from office as chairman of the Public Service Commission, and to appoint in his place a chairman who will carry out his duties in accordance with the provisions of the Public Service Employment Act.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that the motion proposed by the hon. member is a very good indication that the terms of Standing Order 43 should be looked at very closely by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: That committee is comprised of representatives of all parties. It contains very senior members. It is interested in consideration of matters which are important, such as televising our procedure, but, in my view, there are other matters which are even more important such as Standing Order 43. I invite the committee to look at the operation of that Standing Order if it is going to be used in the way it is being used at this time. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Bell: I rise on a point of order. May I ask that when this investigation of Standing Order 43 is conducted Your Honour consider the fact that it is now used prevalently because of the absence of ministers under the roster system.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hope that the committee will consider all aspects, including the representation made by the hon. member.