

Grants to Municipalities

that in committee. In fact, that proposed amendment is already withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Therefore, is it the wish of the hon. member to withdraw motion No. 4?

Mr. Yurko: It is withdrawn.

Motion No. 4 (Mr. Yurko) withdrawn.

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-4, an act respecting grants to municipalities, provinces and other bodies exercising functions of local government that levy real property taxes, be amended in clause 2 by striking out line 12 at page 1 and substituting the following therefor:

“‘assessed value’ means the value attributed annually”.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Mr. Yurko: Mr. Speaker, in concluding my remarks I will speak to the first amendment and the next several amendments and indicate, as I was saying, that the minister was accommodating in committee and said that he would set up a committee to review the suggested amendments. Therefore I made a statement in committee that I would withdraw amendments 1 and 2 on the basis that the minister would give us the assurance that the government would bring this bill back to the committee in one year's time after the committee which he had established, in consultation with representation from the municipalities, would review the suggested amendments.

On the basis of the minister giving us this assurance in committee, which we expected he would do in the House—although I notice he is not here—we would be prepared to withdraw the various amendments we had suggested. I am surprised the minister is not in the House.

Mr. Pinard: He is coming.

Mr. Yurko: Again, on that basis we had agreed that if the minister were setting up his committee, to review this matter and the suggested amendments, not only by members on this side of the House but indeed by members from various municipalities making submissions to the committee, that if he gave us this assurance on behalf of the government that this committee would sit for a full year and bring the bill back in the year, we would be prepared to withdraw the various amendments. This was stated in committee, and it is again stated here in the House.

I find it difficult to put an argument forth when the minister is not even in the House. I say again that I am finding myself in some difficulty without being able to speak directly to the minister and getting his assurance that he gave us in committee. We wanted the same assurance presented to us in the House on behalf of the government rather than just on behalf of the minister. On that basis we were prepared to accept the bill and move it through third reading and therefore expedite the bill accordingly. I am waiting for the minister to hear his assurances before going any further.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I have had a conversation with the minister, and he did not tell me that he had any intention of making a statement in the House on behalf of the government giving formal assurance that these amendments or part of this bill would be reconsidered in committee. He has no intention of making such a formal undertaking here tonight. In these circumstances, the hon. member might as well try to justify his amendments. I am informed that the minister should be here in a few moments, and if there is any change in what I have just said, which is not very likely, I am certain that the minister will not hesitate to rise on a point of order to elaborate on what he told the hon. member. However, once again, I am convinced that the minister did not give any formal assurance that, on behalf of the government, he would undertake to reconsider the bill in committee within a year if the amendments are withdrawn. He could perhaps lead the hon. member to hope that he would be willing to suggest that the government reconsider some of the provisions of the bill, but as for providing formal assurance that the bill would be reconsidered in committee within a year, the minister did not tell me that he had done so. For my part, I am not prepared to give such an assurance to the hon. member on behalf of the government. However, it is not too late. No damage has been done, and if the hon. member wants to try to justify his amendments, we are prepared to hear him.

● (2050)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I have heard the request by the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko) and the reply by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard). If the hon. member for Edmonton East wishes to be recognized, it will be to discuss the amendment he has before this House.

Mr. Yurko: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order rather than to participate in the discussion. It is with regard to the assurances we were given in committee. The minister not only assured us in committee that he was prepared to set up a committee and report back the findings of that committee to the standing committee in a year, but in fact released a formal news release to that effect which he distributed in committee and released to the members accordingly. On my point of order, I intend to disagree with this statement of the House leader. I wish the minister were here to assure us of the procedure he set forth in committee with regard to reviewing this bill in committee in a year.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: On the same point, Mr. Speaker, this is a new element the hon. member is introducing, unless I misunderstood him the first time. What he is now saying is that the minister did not give him the assurance that the committee in question would reconsider those amendments or the bill or part