

HOUSING

SITUATION IN TORONTO—REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT OF REGISTERED HOME OWNERSHIP SAVINGS PLAN

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. As a Member of Parliament from Toronto he is aware of the serious housing crisis in Metropolitan Toronto. He is also aware of the fact that even a family earning an income of \$60,000 a year can no longer afford to buy a home in Metropolitan Toronto.

Will the Minister not agree that the rationale used when the Registered Home Ownership Savings Plan was dropped from the Income Tax Act, that it caused people to postpone their decisions to buy homes, no longer applies since no one can afford to buy a home? Therefore, will he now undertake to the House that he will give serious consideration to reinstating the provisions of that plan in the Income Tax Act?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has put a very precise focus on a problem in Metropolitan Toronto and suggests that we put in place a proposal which would apply on a nation-wide basis. I think that type of solution is not appropriate. There are problems with housing in Toronto that must be dealt with in a focused way.

My colleague is fully aware of the approach we have followed in tax reform, which is to allow us to get tax rates down on a broad basis by removing some of the tax preferences which have been in place, so that everybody benefits by the lower tax rates rather than a limited number of people on specific tax preferences. That is the philosophy we have followed and I believe that is the direction we should continue to go.

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POINT OF ORDER

TIMING OF SECOND READING MOTION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, just before we adjourned for lunch you had put the question which normally occurs at that time in the consideration of a Bill. In this case it was the trade Bill. You said: "When shall the Bill be read a second time?" The Speaker normally answers this question with: "The next sitting of the House." Almost invariably the House agrees and that is the end of the matter. However, in rising on this point of order I want to indicate that in my opinion there is another course of action that the House may decide to take at that point.

It must be remembered that what you are really doing in procedural terms is substituting this pro forma question, "When shall the Bill be read a second time?" for a motion by a Minister, in this case the Minister for International Trade

Point of Order—Mr. Riis

(Mr. Crosbie). The motion, which over the years has fallen into disuse, is "That the Bill be read a second time at the next sitting of the House." It was not uncommon for this motion to have been put to the House in the past and for the House to have divided on it.

I can find no ruling, no precedent or any other evidence to suggest that the ability of Members to force a division at this stage of the Bill has, over time, been extinguished. In fact, after consulting a number of procedural authorities, it is my contention that not only is it proper form for Members to demand a division at this point, it is also possible to amend the motion so that a precise day can be affixed for consideration of the Bill at second reading.

Let me begin by drawing to your attention Citation 722 of *Beauchesne's Fifth Edition*, which states:

When the House has agreed to the first reading of a bill, the Speaker at once proceeds to ask: "When shall the bill be read a second time?" The answer is generally: "At the next sitting of the House." The bill is placed on the *Order Paper*, in its proper place, for a second reading at a future time.

Beauchesne's does not say that the answer is always "At the next sitting of the House", but merely generally, therefore implying that this need not always be the case. There is little question that to request a division on this question is rarely used. In fact, in my reading I can find no instance of such a division in modern times, not even during the infamous Pipeline Debate of 1956. However, if we refer to *Bourinot's Parliamentary Procedure, Fourth Edition*, we are provided with clear guidance on this point. At page 508 *Bourinot* states:

When the house has agreed to the first reading of a bill the speaker at once proceeds to propose the next motion. He asks "When shall the bill be read a second time?" The answer is generally "At the next sitting of the house"; and the bill is thereupon placed upon the order paper in its proper place for a second reading at a future time.

That is almost word for word what is contained in *Beauchesne's Fifth Edition* and is undoubtedly the source for Citation 722. However, *Bourinot* goes on to state at page 508:

This motion passes almost invariably—as it is a purely formal motion, proposed with the object of placing the bill on the orders for a second reading, when all discussion can most regularly and conveniently take place; but though it is unusual to raise a debate on the merits of the bill on such a motion, yet it is perfectly in order to divide the house on the question as at any other stage of the measure.

I think that is the relevant comment, that it is in fact in order to divide on this question as we do at other stages.

Here, then, we have an explicit assertion from *Bourinot*, a long-standing and well-respected procedural reference, that although perhaps uncommon, it is perfectly in order to force a division at this point. In fact, there are several precedents to corroborate this position.

On March 21, 1877, we find the following entry in *Journals*, page 160:

Mr. Ross (Middlesex) moved, seconded by Mr. Smith (Peel), and the question being put, that the Bill from the Senate, intitled, "An Act for the Relief of Mary Jane Bates" be read a second time tomorrow; the House divided; and it was resolved in the affirmative.