

The Budget—Mr. Pickersgill

means and a subamendment was moved by Mr. Garland, the then member for Bow River and seconded by Mr. Woodsworth, and it was very much in the form of this amendment, although not so long. It had only three clauses beginning with "whereas" while our amendment has six clauses; but I submit that there is no sanctity in having only three clauses rather than six. Indeed, some of the other citations I will give will be rather longer than that one.

In 1932, at page 247 of the *Journals*, a situation similar to the one to which I have just referred arose. Mr. Ralston had moved an amendment. Mr. Gardiner, the member for Acadia—I think that was his constituency—seconded by Mr. Woodsworth, moved an amendment of an argumentative sort very similar to this one. This time there were five clauses beginning "whereas". Therefore there does not seem to be anything unusual about the present case.

Then in the session of 1932-33, as reported at page 377 of the *Journals*, an amendment was moved also by Mr. Ralston, and a subamendment was moved on that occasion by Mr. Lucas. I think he was the member for Camrose; I believe that is what his constituency was called. That was seconded by Mr. Woodsworth. It also contains a series—four of them, indeed—of clauses giving an argument for the proposition.

As I have said, the most precise parallel so far as quotation is concerned is the one I drew to Your Honour's attention the other day. That is the one moved by Mr. Heenan and seconded by Mr. Mackenzie of Vancouver Centre, a very distinguished parliamentarian indeed.

There is one other consideration which I shall advance with respect to amendments to the motion to go into committee of ways and means. As Your Honour knows, the motion to go into committee of ways and means is one which gives the Minister of Finance the opportunity of reviewing the whole ambit of the economic and financial policies of the government.

I have had a careful search made of the records going back to the year 1930, and I find that until the present government came into office there were only, at any time, two points of order raised on amendments to the motion to go into committee of ways and means, and in neither case by the government. Mr. Bennett raised a point when he was leader of the opposition in 1937, and the Speaker, in July of 1942, initiated a discussion on the regularity of an amendment moved by Mr. Blackmore. But on no occasion in all that long period when Mr. Bennett was prime minister, when Mr. Mackenzie King

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was prime minister or when Mr. St. Laurent was prime minister, from 1930 on, has the government ever raised a question about these amendments to go into committee of ways and means.

I suggest it is for the very good reason that this is an opportunity, and has always been regarded as an opportunity, for the fullest and freest debate on the whole scope of the economic and financial policies of the government. It is surely a simple rule that any subject which may be discussed in a debate may also be the subject of a motion seeking to get the opinion of the house. What we are seeking to do in our amendment is not merely to get an affirmation from the house on the substantive part of the amendment, which Your Honour indicated you had already found in order, but also on the preamble on which that conclusion is based.

It seems to me it would be unduly restrictive of the rights of private members as against the government—I do not exclude the government members, I mean private members in all parts of the house—it seems to me it would be unduly restrictive of the historic rights of the representatives of the people as opposed to the advisers of the crown to restrict the opportunities of the House of Commons to express itself upon the whole ambit of the economic and financial policies of the government.

Finally, sir, I would draw Your Honour's attention to the amendment itself and to the citations which seem to be the only part of it to which Your Honour took much exception, or suggested there might be any exception taken. The citations are in paragraph 2. There are eight of them. They all deal expressly and explicitly with matters which were the subject of the address by the Minister of Finance in presenting his budget on December 20. They deal precisely with subjects which he dealt with upon that occasion. It is true that they express views previously expressed by the minister himself and by some of his colleagues on those subjects, but surely it is not going to be argued that the previous expressions of ministers are not a proper subject for debate and, indeed, for decision by the house.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): For debate.

Mr. Pickersgill: And, indeed, for decision by the house. It is precisely because we wish to point out how wrong the government has been, and to get the house to agree with us about this proposition, that we have listed these citations. Of course we do not deny the right of any hon. member to disagree with us, but we do claim the right to have our proposition voted upon by the house and not