

House, and at the same time on the question of the early retirement of certain civil servants, which happens to be fitted into this omnibus bill. The relationship between those two questions is absolutely non-existent. There is no connection between the early retirement of senior civil servants and the creation of this new ministry. Yet we are being asked to decide on these two questions in single recorded votes, both on second reading and third reading. That is a denial of fairness. I must add my voice to those who protest most vehemently against our being asked to consider second reading of a bill of this kind.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to take up the time of the House with arguments that have already been so well presented, particularly by my colleague the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave), and by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). As a matter of fact, the latter advanced some arguments that I was going to present, and I agree thoroughly with what he said. I would just like to add that I do not think he went far enough.

The question of what items should be within a single piece of legislation, as Your Honour well knows, has been a problem for a great many years. Shortly after I first came to the House in 1954, the government of the day presented a series of amendments to the Criminal Code and, although contained in one bill, they seemed to involve a great many unrelated principles. Of course at that time there was an opportunity for a member to express his views in the House on second reading but there was no opportunity—and I think this is important—to have a recorded vote on specific amendments, as there is under our new procedures. At that time, technically speaking, while the proposed amendments came under the same umbrella, inasmuch as they dealt with the criminal law of Canada, I repeat that they dealt with a number of different principles.

● (3:40 p.m.)

When the latest amendments to the Criminal Code were considered a couple of years ago there was, of course, under our new rules an opportunity for hon. members on the report stage, after the bill had been referred to special committees of this House, to express their views on the different principles involved. These principles involved such things as gambling, lotteries, abortion, sex offences and the like. However, as has been pointed out, in with this bill we are dealing with a whole series of apparently unrelated principles. We are being asked at this time to vote on them en bloc. It is like saying to us, "Do not throw out the baby with the bath water; surely, you do not want to vote against the whole bill just because of one small objection you have to one aspect of the bill?" The implication in that argument is that every member of the House is in complete agreement with almost every clause of the bill, and that is manifestly not so. I am sure Your Honour recognizes that.

In that connection, Your Honour, may I say that I think it is the right and privilege of every member of this House to make known his position on certain matters.

Government Organization Act, 1970

That is one of the reasons our constituents sent us down here. On matters of public importance, and particularly of moral importance, that come before this House, a member has the right to have his vote recorded. If this bill is considered in committee of the whole, there will be no opportunity whatsoever for a member's vote, to be recorded so that his constituents will know how he voted. Under those circumstances our parliamentary system provides no opportunity for recording the votes of elected representatives, on certain subjects. It has been said, "Of course, the people can read *Hansard*." It is not always easy for constituents to get hold of copies of *Hansard*, particularly since nowadays there are such large constituencies. I think it is only fair and proper that a member's position on any particular clause of the bill, especially a bill containing a number of unrelated items such as this bill, should be recorded.

This leads me to the final point I wish to make, Mr. Speaker. I have already indicated on many occasions in this House when successive governments have been in power, and when a question has arisen about the sort of legislation which may be presented to the House, that I object to an umbrella bill which introduces a whole lot of unrelated principles.

An hon. Member: The Tories did that.

Mr. Nesbitt: Arguments have been presented on this point. For instance, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) may express the view that this is really a bill to improve the organization of government. Yet, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) so aptly put it, you could include almost everything in such a bill and call it an act to improve the quality of life in Canada. I submit that a set of principles or guidelines will have to be laid down. I do not think anyone in this House wants to place an unnecessary burden on Your Honour or whoever may in future succeed Your Honour. Nevertheless, somehow guidelines will have to be laid down. These matters have come before this House time and again. Unless guidelines are laid down to prevent governments, either the present government or any other, from trying to do this kind of thing, this House will become nothing but a mockery and a joke. I suggest, respectfully, that Your Honour might defer a decision in this matter for a day or so, and then lay down for the present occasion as well as for future occasions a set of guidelines that ought to be followed in such cases.

I realize, being a pragmatic person, that a certain amount of discretion must always be left to Your Honour, or to your eventual successor. That will be necessary. It seems to me that some sort of guidelines will have to be laid down to indicate that the parts, of any omnibus bill that is presented to the House must bear some closer relationships than is apparent in this case. In other words, the principles of the bill, to refer to Mr. Speaker Michener's decision alluded to by the President of the Privy Council, must themselves be related. I hope that to avoid difficulties not only on this occasion but in future, Your Honour will lay down some guide-