

Yukon Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Order. The Chair is now ready to give a decision on whether the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Yukon is receivable. As we are debating second reading of this bill may I refer hon. members to standing order 77 which reads as follows:

Every public bill shall be read twice in the house before committal or amendment.

• (2:40 p.m.)

Therefore, as we are on second reading and have a motion before us I believe that this amendment is not receivable.

Mr. Lambert: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, on the basis of your ruling it would then appear that no bill can be amended on second reading or prior to second reading. With the greatest respect, that certainly is not the tradition of this house.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): May I add, Mr. Speaker, with great respect, that there are a great many bills, before standing committees of this house which have been improperly referred if your ruling is correct.

Mr. Nielsen: May I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there are precedents in the proceedings of this house for taking precisely the course which we are taking now and it is evidently within the rules to make a motion in the words which have been submitted to Your Honour.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): I also refer the hon. members to paragraph 6 of citation 202 of Beauchesne, fourth edition, which reads:

It is not an amendment to a motion to move that the question go to a committee.

Mr. Nielsen: That is not the whole citation though, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McIlraith: Yes, it is.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Order, please. The amendment reads:

That Bill C-147 be not now read a second time but that the said bill be referred to the standing committee of this house on northern affairs and national resources.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I know that in a co-operative way many things can be accomplished in this house satisfactory to all members concerned. I wish that the government, particularly the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, would consider the suggestion

which has been made in the amendment. I realize that possibly this could have been done if there had been prior consultation with the minister.

I had an experience recently where the Minister of Labour agreed with me that a bill in his name be referred to a standing committee because ample opportunity is given there to those who wish to make representations and probably a greater degree of flexibility in discussion is allowed. While this process is in effect I believe this house can engage itself in some other way and thereby proceed with the business of this house before us which has to be considered. I believe a great deal of the time of this house would be saved if such a concession were made by the government in this case.

I would appeal to the government. Even though Your Honour has ruled this amendment out of order and there is some dispute as to the ruling, nevertheless if the government felt at this point that they would be agreeable to sending this bill to the committee for representations I am sure this would be welcomed by those who have a direct interest. I am sure that the members of the Yukon council would be glad to have afforded to them an opportunity to present their case in respect of the bill. After all, this bill does represent something very vital to them because it will affect their very interests, their functions and their financial position.

Surely under those circumstances and in all fairness they should be given an opportunity to present their case and put forward their own ideas and recommendations on this bill. It would also give an opportunity to the government to state their position more clearly and effectively and there would be a greater opportunity to do so in a standing committee than in committee of the whole house. Therefore I would ask the government to consider its position. If the suggestion is agreed to we can go on with other business we have before us which has to be considered.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but I am not quite clear with regard to the precise stage we are at. I am not clear whether the amendment has been ruled out of order or not. If it has not, I would want to reserve my right to argue that it is out of order and give authorities in support of that position. Has the amendment been ruled out of order?