

Taxation Reform

the committee, what they think of the proposals in the white paper, and to advise as to the areas that should be looked at when the committee is in session. This was done by the Leader of the Opposition today when he made his speech. He spoke of some aspects of the white paper of which he disapproved. Presumably, the members of his party who will sit on the committee were listening to him and taking notice of the points he was making.

It is my submission that when we refer a white paper of this kind to a committee for examination, it is never our intention as members of the House of Commons to place restrictions on the way in which that white paper should be examined, or to narrow the examination of the policies set forth in the white paper. The intention is that each member of the House, no matter whether he sits on that side or on this side, should be free and unfettered to attend the committee, investigate every aspect of the white paper and report upon it in the best way possible.

If hon. members opposite had faith in their own members of the committee, having told them in this House what their views are they would find an excellent report coming back from the committee. I do not suppose it was really the intention of the Leader of the Opposition to restrict his members in the work they do on the committee. I suggest that for these reasons the amendment does not add to what we are doing here, but rather detracts from it.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, could I ask the hon. member a question? Would the hon. member agree that it would be the right of any member of the committee to move a motion along the lines contained within the four corners of the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Deachman: I certainly think it would be a right. Having listened to the views of hon. members opposite, I am sure those members of the hon. gentleman's party who are interested in moving such a motion will do so in the committee. Why should hon. members opposite who will attend the committee meetings be given this kind of restrictive instruction to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That aspect of the debate might be pursued in the committee. I think at the moment we should limit our discussion specifically to the procedural aspects of the motion.

[Mr. Deachman.]

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to repeat the arguments that have been put forward, but I should like to read part of Standing Order 5(8) as follows:

Standing committees shall be severally empowered to examine and enquire into all such matters as may be referred to them by the House, and, to report from time to time—

It then goes on to list the duties. If the amendment instructed the committee to obtain counsel or do certain things in order to examine this red manifesto—it is not a White paper—I do not think Your Honour would have any difficulty with it. We have to get around, and I think this is what is bothering Your Honour, any instructions in the amendment that in fact change those matters which the committee is to examine. That might be a matter of argument or inference, and it is probably a matter for the committee to decide. Surely, specific and proper instructions can be given to a committee.

I think now is the time to point out this important fact. We were told, when committees were changed and took over the right of the House of Commons to sit as a committee of the whole to examine bills and estimates, that they would be non-partisan and would function as such, along the lines of Congressional committees. We have found that this is not the case.

● (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, I think it is putting too much onus on you to ask Your Honour to make a decision in this regard. I think this is a matter on which Parliament should vote in order to decide whether this amendment should be allowed in respect of the red manifesto. It is a red manifesto, because it is red and it is a manifesto. We are saying that when the committee takes a look at the white paper, whether or not it has counsel, expert or other witnesses before it, it should have certain instructions, and those instructions should be to develop alternatives to the proposed disincentives affecting middle-income groups and small businesses in particular. We should zero in on these things.

Surely the instructions do not say that we cannot examine those parts which take away all incentives. The committee must look at this aspect of the matter because this red manifesto is very hard on Canadians in the middle-income group. I can understand Your Honour's problem. If it were a matter of saying that the committee was to have before