

Energy Security Act

Mr. Taylor: I am discussing a point of representation. My ability to represent my people rests with me being able to vote.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member rose on a question of privilege. Unless that question of privilege flows from the deliberations today—and he is now referring to deliberations on which I have ruled—it is therefore ruled out; he cannot intervene on these points. If the hon. member has another question of privilege about the manner in which he should be allowed to represent his electors, he can raise it at another time by giving me the notice required by the Standing Orders. I cannot entertain a question of privilege at this time at this point.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, the whole point I am raising is basic to democracy. If a member is unable to represent the thinking of the people in his constituency, something is wrong.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Taylor: Are we running a communist state or what?

Madam Speaker: All the debates in this House are about democracy.

Mr. Taylor: This is not democracy, this is communism.

Madam Speaker: Democracy in this House can only be preserved by following the rules which the House has devised for the conduct of debates. I am telling the hon. member that if he wants to discuss this important matter of democracy and his particular role in preserving that democracy and in representing his electors, he may do that, but he must do it according to the periods and timing reserved for that under our Standing Orders. That is what I am saying to the hon. member. Order in the House is basic to the functioning of this Parliament and the ultimate preservation of democracy. My preserve is to maintain order. I do not want to allow the hon. member to discuss this matter now because it is not in order at the present time. I can entertain his argument at another time.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, your ruling prevents me from representing my people. It affects democracy.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I think I have been very reasonable—

Mr. Taylor: You are not reasonable.

Madam Speaker: —in expressing the views of the Chair in this particular circumstance. I am afraid the hon. member cannot continue. I would ask him to co-operate.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Madam Speaker, I have some concern over this and I seek clarification on this ruling. Something that Speaker Lamoureux treated as very serious, as has been mentioned by my colleagues, is the opportunity of members who deal with bills before us in the House of Commons to have the chance to vote individually on the various clauses. My concern arises from the fact that in this omnibus bill before us, as has been mentioned, we have four schedules which are in fact acts.

Madam Speaker: I understand, but that point has been covered by the ruling. It has been argued by hon. members before the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper). It was covered by the ruling and the subsequent exchange we had.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, what the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper) was trying to get across is another unanswered question, unanswered in my submission in your ruling and unanswered so far in any of the discussions taking place this afternoon. Normally if a bill is treated in Committee of the Whole under the normal procedure, we go through it clause by clause and, as the Chair has pointed out, we can have a standing division clause by clause.

One of the central points made yesterday by the hon. member for Calgary Centre was that since our precedents require a schedule, in this case a whole act, to be treated as a clause in the bill, then we are deprived of that right of dividing with a standing division clause by clause.

As I understood the hon. member for Peace River, what he was trying to ask the Chair as a result of your ruling today was, in effect, does the ruling of the Chair by virtue of the precedents which the Chair has cited deprive members of a standing division in Committee of the Whole on each separate clause in each of the schedules? To put it in the positive sense, can members be assured by virtue of the Chair's ruling today that they will have the right to a division on each of the clauses in each of the schedules to the bill? That is the question.

Madam Speaker: At the present time the question is hypothetical.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: I suggest to the hon. member that that question will be dealt with by the Chairman when the time arises.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, surely members are entitled to know at this stage, because we are breaking new ground. We are dealing with four distinct pieces of legislation in a schedule. With the kind of legislation we had hitherto, we had the right to divide clause by clause at the Committee of the Whole stage. Surely the Chair, for the protection of the rights of members and by virtue of the decision which was rendered today, can reassure us and answer positively the question whether we will have the right to vote clause by clause on legislation of this nature, notwithstanding the unusual manner in which it is being treated.

All we ask of the Chair is a reassurance that that right will not be taken away from us, that we will have the right to a standing division on each of the clauses in each of the schedules, they being separate pieces of legislation. That has been past practice. I hope we can be reassured it will be continued in this instance, notwithstanding the rare problem we are dealing with here.