

It is not a majority of the Parties. However, I have the other points.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the arguments of the coalition Party. Let me point out that Standing Order 117, as I read it, contains no specification that the notice itself specify the number of days. There are some comments with respect to how little time has to be given in the actual motion that is moved. I submit that I have met the requirements of Standing Order 117 by way of negotiation and notice.

I listened with interest to the coalition Party's comments that a majority of the Parties has come to an agreement on what is appropriate. I will leave it to the people of Canada to decide whether they are actually serious about 150 days at report stage and 200 days at third reading. I would point out that a majority of the Parties represents 25 per cent of the Members of the House. I am not denigrating the efforts of that 25 per cent but pointing out that the use of the word "majority" is not correct on that point.

I return to Standing Order 117 to indicate to the Chair that it only requires that the point be made that an agreement could not be reached and therefore the Government is moving under that Standing Order. It is our intention to do so tomorrow.

I regret this very much. We wanted a debate on the substance of the amendments and the substance at third reading. The delaying tactics of the Opposition which wasted all of last Wednesday and two hours this morning, without any effort to debate the substance, is the reason, along with the fact that we could not reach any agreement, the Government is taking this position.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to clarify a point made by the Deputy Government House Leader. Earlier today the two Opposition Parties negotiated, discussed, and through consultation came forward with what we thought was a reasoned approach. If the polls of the day are to reflect the standings, then the two Opposition Parties have reflected the view of 65 per cent of the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: I think the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap is an experienced procedural advocate and knows that it is not the place of the Chair to get into debate on what the polls mean or what they do not mean.

In any event, I have the point raised and I will give it some careful consideration and return to the Chamber shortly.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, in order to assist you in your deliberations, I want to clarify a factual point. The consultations in question did in fact involve the representatives of the three Parties in this House. When I spoke of a majority of the Parties, I should have made it clear that I was talking about a majority of the representatives of the Parties in the sense that the agreement in the letter read out by the Deputy Government House Leader was made between myself as

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

representative of the Liberal Party, the Official Opposition, and the Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) as representative of the New Democratic Party.

Contrary to what my hon. friend, the Deputy Government House Leader, has been saying about coalitions, let me stress that we are simply carrying out what we understand to be the requirements to put into place the operations of Standing Order 116, which has nothing to do with coalitions or lack of coalitions.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the comments of the Hon. Member for Windsor West. Of course I will consider his comments.

I think that is sufficient discussion on that point. I will return as quickly as possible to give the House the benefit of my considerations.

• (1600)

Mr. Speaker: Resuming debate. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, before you leave the chair, I just want to thank you and those of the table for the work that you have done over the last couple of days. It has been a very difficult task for you. I might say that a number of the amendments that have been introduced in the House were either introduced or voted down at committee stage. They have been changed somewhat so that they can be reintroduced at the report stage. We understand the reasoning behind these amendments from the opposition Parties. It is interesting to note that both of them are going to tear up the agreement, yet they have all these amendments that they want to introduce to Bill C-130. If you would pass on our word of thanks to all those who were involved in putting in those extra hours, I would appreciate it on behalf of the Government.

The Government has examined the amendments proposed by Hon. Members opposite, and it has found them to be unacceptable for a variety of reasons. Indeed, many of these amendments are an affront to Parliament and show just how irresponsibly the Opposition has approached this whole debate.

When he appeared before the legislative committee on August 2, the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) stated that he could not accept amendments proposed by the Opposition at that time, for three reasons.

First, a number of them conflicted directly with the free trade agreement itself, an international agreement entered into by Canada. It is not the role of Parliament to pick and choose among the pieces. Many in fact were ruled out of order.

Second, a number of amendments purported to exempt from the legislation and agreement matters which are already covered.

Finally, a number were downright silly and frivolous. That was on August 2. Now, we have before us today much the