

*Point of order*

make his statement and to reserve, which in fact will give my colleagues more time than usual, the time which would be given normally to the opposition Parties to reply. We can reserve that time and I can meet with my colleagues to decide on an appropriate time. They may wish to do it shortly after Question Period, but I can work that out with the Opposition House Leaders.

We have copies of the statement. We would be prepared to distribute those as quickly as possible so that those Members can follow along as the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) makes his statement.

[Translation]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier made a statement about a traditional custom in this House which consists in receiving a copy of a Minister's statement in advance. This custom is very important in terms of co-operation among the Members and Parties in this House.

But we also have a comment by the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) . . .

• (1120)

[English]

He has made it quite clear that in his own Party's view, and under all the circumstances, the Opposition should have had a copy of the statement. However, the Hon. Minister of State (Mr. Lewis) has risen and expressed some regret that that was not possible at this time. He has proposed that the Hon. Minister make his statement now and that time be reserved later in the day for an adequate response by spokespersons for the Official Opposition and for the New Democratic Party.

As far as the Chair is concerned, if that is the disposition of the House, then the Chair would be very pleased to co-operate. Perhaps the Chair can have some response from Hon. Members.

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, we thank you for your comments. I thank the Minister of State for his comments as well.

I operate under the assumption that the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) would have preferred that I have in my hand and that my colleague from the New Democratic Party have in his hand a copy of the statement which the Minister is about to deliver. I operate under the assumption that the Deputy Prime Minister would have preferred that that notice, which I received as the Speaker was speaking and which states that there will be a statement, had arrived an hour or an hour and a half ago. I operate under positive assumptions about the Government's intentions.

I say to the Deputy Prime Minister and to the Minister of State that there is a resolution to this problem. It is a problem and it concerns an important tradition in this place. The Deputy Prime Minister wanted us to have copies of the statement but for some reason outside the House that did not

work. He will talk to the appropriate staff people. I spoke a moment ago to the Deputy Prime Minister who told me that he was hoping that the statement would be here momentarily. Let me suggest that it would be in the interests of the House, in the interests of the Government and in the interests of the traditions of this place that the Deputy Prime Minister make his statement at 12 o'clock. Hopefully the statement that the Deputy Prime Minister assured me would be forthcoming momentarily will be in our hands within five minutes. That would give us the usual time to have a look at it. We could then have the Minister's statement, not delayed too long, and the response of the spokespersons all at the same time in the House.

With all-Party consent that is more than a reasonable suggestion I would submit to you and to all my colleagues in the House, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the suggestion made by the Hon. Member from Newfoundland. As spokesperson for the New Democratic Party on this subject, I understand that the statement the Minister is proposing to make is very important. It is a statement which would change the status of a major Crown corporation.

It seems to us obvious, and I think all Hon. Members would agree, that spokespersons for the opposition Parties ought to have an opportunity to give consideration so that they can comment in a constructive way in response to an important change being proposed by the Government. I see no reason why we could not have this matter delayed until 12 o'clock at which time we could deal with the matter in the usual way.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, up until a few moments ago we were dealing with this matter in the hypothetical with respect to its subject matter. I submit that, in view of the fact that the subject matter is now on the floor of the House, the appropriate thing to do is have the Deputy Prime Minister proceed with his statement. We will reserve and make arrangements at whatever time is convenient to the Opposition for time to respond. We will co-operate so that they can respond comprehensively to the Deputy Prime Minister's statement.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the subject matter is now on the floor of the House and within the public purview, that it would be appropriate for the Deputy Prime Minister to proceed at this time.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Minister cannot understand the dilemma we are in. I am not arguing the substance of the subject matter. As a matter of fact, officially, I do not know what the statement is all about.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Gauthier:** If the substance of the matter is in front of us I admit that I do not know what is being talked about in terms of what the Minister will say in his statement except that it is in regard to something relative to his portfolio.