

Routine Proceedings

I was interested in his comments about unanimous consent in this House. He is quite correct in saying that we are always happy when the House can work on a basis of mutual co-operation and discussion. I want to stop a second and say that I was interested in his remark that we always have given unanimous consent. I think perhaps the member was caught up in his own enthusiasm because there has been so much good co-operation. I do not think we always give unanimous consent, neither within his party, the official opposition, nor within the government. We like as much as possible to co-operate, but that is a bit of an ideal world.

To get to the motion itself, I think for such motions there has been a procedure that is more or less laid out. I am referring to Chapter 15, "Standing, Special and Joint Committees" of Beauchesne's, Fifth Edition, that seems to indicate that the normal procedure for attaining the goal that the member proposes today be first and foremost that a request be made to the person who the member would like to call, and that procedure should be followed.

I think in this circumstance the government cannot see anything exceptional happening which would not require that we go through that normal procedure before coming to this exceptional measure of asking the House for unanimous consent.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the advice from my colleague. I listened yesterday to suggestions from the Solicitor General and also the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank that questions regarding Senator Cogger ought to be raised in the other place. This makes it difficult for us in the New Democratic Party. I suppose it makes it impossible to raise it in the other place because we do not have members in the other place—not that we want members in the other place. The reality is we are not there.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, if I could ask for clarification from my hon. colleague. From what I can gather he supports in principle this idea, but had a further suggestion on a more appropriate way to proceed in order to have Senator Cogger appear before the House. I must admit I did not follow him carefully.

Mr. Speaker: The minister has raised the suggestion that there may be another way to do this, if in fact it was the disposition of the House to do it. I think I should advise members that certainly the past practice has

always been that in a circumstance like this a request is sent by the House to the Senate prior to moving on a motion which is the same as the one that has been proposed by the hon. member for Kamloops. I am just bringing that to members' attention because I think the Chair might have to intervene on this.

Mr. Charest: If I understood you correctly, Mr. Speaker, I think you and I, with all respect, are more or less indicating the same thing. The procedure that would be normally followed by the hon. member if he wishes to have somebody in that person's capacity as a senator to come before the House would require that the request be sent to that person.

What I am saying today is that on procedural grounds I think the motion put forward by the member is a bit premature, that he should first go through what has been established in the past as being the procedure that should be followed in such circumstances and then come before the House again if he feels he has not been successful in that procedure.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I should clarify the situation. The notice of motion which the hon. member for Kamloops put on the Order Paper is asking the House for an order that a certain Senator attend at the bar of this House. The request the hon. member for Kamloops has now put to the House concerns another motion which has been distributed to hon. members, which reads:

That a message be sent to the Senate requesting that an Order of the Senate be issued for Senator Michel Cogger to attend at the bar of the House for the purpose of providing information concerning the receipt of public moneys by any firms with which he has been associated.

As I understand it procedurally we are now in the position where the Hon. Member for Kamloops is asking if the House would consent to this order without debate at this time. Am I correct?

Mr. Riis: Yes, that is correct, Mr. Speaker. I say with all due respect to my colleagues that this is a common practice in the House. For many months and years we have been providing, on most occasions, unanimous consent to permit the government to initiate motions of one kind or another without the proper notice. I recognize, as you have pointed out, Sir, that I have not given adequate notice and have changed what is on the Order Paper. For that reason I am seeking unanimous consent, without debate. As I have indicated, I have no intention