

Privilege

we would like acknowledgement by noon on Monday this past week, or some form of response as to how we might proceed, having been told that we must have some motion officially on the floor. Because we had no response, that motion to provide for an additional 10 days was put forward by the member for Ontario. That involved 30 hours of debate, at which time the chairman invoked the procedure, as you well know.

The question at the time was whether members of the committee would be allowed to be involved and put amendments which they might have. As has been aptly noted, there is a provision whereby the government could invoke Standing Order 78(3), where that procedure is provided for. That procedure in effect takes authority away from the committee.

Mr. Rodriguez: It is legal.

Mr. Dorin: Therefore, I would argue that what is involved here is that the committee was endeavouring to retain control over its own procedure and in doing so, while there may be questions of order or procedure, there has not been any—

Mr. Speaker: Just a minute. I would ask hon. members to my left to remember that a great deal of patience has been exercised in allowing those arguments to be put. I will hear the hon. member. I do not think he needs to go on too much longer, but I will hear him.

Mr. Dorin: Mr. Speaker, I have completed my remarks.

Mr. Speaker: I know the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands usually makes a very good contribution, but I think I have heard enough. I will take this matter away. I will consider it very carefully and report back to the House as soon as possible.

The hon. member for Kamloops has a question of privilege. He may have had a communication from his right hon. friend who has had to leave. Under the circumstances, especially given the comments of the hon. member for Kamloops, the right hon. gentleman should be present, and I would be prepared to move this over to another time when he can be here. He did stay until just a few minutes ago. I would ask the hon. member if he would co-operate in that.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, under normal circumstances, I would be more than pleased to but I have commitments in the next couple of days that

will make it difficult. I think it is appropriate that this is raised at the earliest opportunity.

Before I raise the point, there is another point of privilege that ought to take precedence over mine.

Mr. Speaker: Once an application is made and it is in order, I think the Speaker has some discretion, especially when I have some indication of what it is about, as to when I will hear it. I would prefer that the right hon. gentleman was here in the Chamber. This is a practice that I have established for both sides of the House. Perhaps, the hon. member for Kamloops could consider his position.

• (1650)

There is another point of privilege and I am looking to the floor. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

BILL C-56

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Thank you for your patience, Mr. Speaker, in hearing all the points of privilege today. I know that this is a long and trying day for you. We all have had long and trying days this past week. I rise on this point of privilege arising from debate—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member and others will be able to shorten this long and trying day. Will the hon. member please continue.

Ms. Hunter: This point of privilege arises from the debate in the House yesterday on Bill C-56, the amendment to the Small Business Loans Act. I bring this important question to your attention at this earliest opportunity as is required by the rules of the House.

My question of privilege concerns a ruling by the Acting Speaker which I believe infringed on my ability as a member of Parliament to do the job I was elected to do, that of representing my constituents. The bill being debated was of great concern to the small business community in my riding. The timing of the debate was crucial. As we have seen with the number of points of privilege that you had before you today, the mood in this place is of such a nature that cutting off debate was not the thing to do at the time.

I wanted to speak on this bill. However, I was denied that right as a result of an error by the Chair. At the conclusion of the remarks by the member for Saint-Léonard yesterday the Acting Speaker asked if the House