

S. O. 29

The Chair is in some difficulty, and I have indicated to Hon. Members on both sides that the Chair is somewhat concerned that, in the absence of apparently any allotted days, or perhaps some arrangements soon in committee, this matter is left in a position where it can only be addressed each day in Question Period, and in circumstances which are somewhat less than debate.

I request that the Hon. Member for Burnaby and the Minister have a discussion tonight which will not preclude the fact that I would hear a further application on the same subject.

Perhaps the time has come when it would be in the interests of this place that some time is made available to address some of these matters. In the absence of that, the only action that Hon. Members in the Opposition can take is to ask for an emergency debate.

I am also mindful in reminding Members that one of the reasons expressed many times in the past by Speakers for turning down an emergency debate was that there was some other place and another occasion to debate the same subject.

I would ask that the Hon. Member for Burnaby contact the Hon. Minister and perhaps the chairman of the committee and see if something can be worked out between now and tomorrow. I will hear the Hon. Member tomorrow if he wishes to put in a further application.

Mr. Robinson: I certainly will speak with the Minister, as Your Honour has suggested. With respect to the suggestion of proceedings before the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General on this important matter, I wish to draw to the attention of Your Honour that yesterday at an organizational meeting of that particular standing committee an attempt was indeed made to bring this serious question before the committee, and it is partly because of the fact that I was informed that this would not be possible until some time late next month that I brought forward the motion seeking leave to adjourn under Standing Order 29.

However, I will certainly speak with the Minister tonight, as Your Honour has suggested.

Mr. Speaker: I think that I should make it clear to all Hon. Members, and also to the public, that on applications for an emergency debate the Government is put in a position of disadvantage in the sense that it cannot respond to the application. That is the reason the application is put in its most finite terms, and the Hon. Member has co-operated.

But it is not here that the Chair can entertain a discussion or an argument across the Chamber on the merits or otherwise. That is one of the reasons I am inviting the Hon. Member and others to meet and have a discussion.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, when listening to the comments, I understood that the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) said that the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General was reorganizing.

I fail to understand how the committees could reorganize at this time because the House has not given concurrence to the Striking Committee report that was tabled in the House in the last few days. I cannot see how a committee would reorganize without the House concurring in the membership of those committees. At this time I would object that any committee would reorganize without the House concurring in those reports.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) points out another matter arising out of the comments. Perhaps the Hon. Member as chairman of the committee would wish to respond.

Mr. David Daubney (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the committee, I wish to advise the Opposition Whip that we did not have an organizational meeting. Yesterday we had a future business meeting at which we planned our agenda between now and the end of the calendar year, and in fact beyond. We agreed to hear from the Solicitor General in the middle of November on the issue raised by the NDP justice critic.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister on a point of order.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)): Mr. Speaker, as you will appreciate, under the rules it is difficult for me to respond on behalf of the Government with respect to a request for an emergency debate. Therefore, I simply raise the question as to whether the House considers *Hansard* from Monday, September 28, 1987, to be correct in that I note that there were no statements made under Standing Order 21 with respect to this subject, and only one series of questions.

I would also point out that *Hansard*, September 29, 1987, records no statements under Standing Order 21, and only one series of questions from the Hon. Member.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that for an emergency to be a true emergency more than one Member of the House must be seized of that issue and take the opportunity available to Members, through Standing Order 21 and Oral Questions, to bring it to the attention of the House.

Mr. Speaker: As I stated, on these applications the Government is at a disadvantage. But the Hon. Minister is ingenious, and has at least put some of his thoughts forward.

At the risk of closing off other very ingenious Members who may wish to get into a debate, which is not required, I request that Hon. Members follow my suggestion, and if necessary I can hear the matter again tomorrow.

There is another motion under Standing Order 29 and I recognize the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor.

SUSPENSION OF FREE TRADE TALKS

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I am interested to hear the definition of emergency as suggested