

through. And we know why they wanted it pushed through. We know why! After all they have—

Mr. Speaker: I want to assure hon. members I have heard the point and I will consider it and see if there is something that can be done to convenience members. I do not think there is any need to extend this discussion.

Is the hon. member rising on a different point? I recognize the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on another point.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, this morning I, and I am sure all hon. members, received a notice from the Clerk advising of a draw to be held pursuant to Standing Order 87(2) for Private Members' Business on Thursday, February 1.

Members will know that the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedures and Private Members' Business had the honour to submit its seventh report to the House a few weeks ago—in fact some months ago now—in which it recommended some changes to the Standing Orders relating to Private Members' Business that will expedite the disposal of this kind of business in the House. It provided for additional hours, it provided for a revised system of draw and so on.

I am wondering if I might request of Your Honour that the draw to be held on February 1 be deferred to a later date so that the motion standing in the name of the chairman of our committee could be debated and approved by the House before the draw occurs.

• (1520)

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, on the same thoughtful point of order, I want to reply on behalf of the New Democratic Party. We spent a lot of time as members examining the whole process of Private Members' Hour. At the beginning of that process I suggested that we look at it in a more comprehensive way and not simply that the New Democrats had been particularly ambitious in presenting various motions and various private bills when the Liberals had presented a handful and I think the Conservatives had presented virtually none. But that is beside the point. That is not the issue.

Point of Order

On the other hand, we recognize that perhaps by backing off and introducing some changes, it would be to the benefit of all members. That is certainly our main motivation in considering this.

I want to say that we are in the process right now as a caucus of examining the very important report. It was a good report. The members on it obviously worked hard on behalf of all of the members of the House. But I think, rather than take this what I believe is a premature step, I would rather hold off for a day or two. The caucuses will meet tomorrow, I understand, at which time I think all the caucuses, if they have not already, will have a chance to deliberate on this important issue.

So while my inclination is to give consent, I think in the spirit of the value of the private members' work in this House, it deserves another day or two of reflection, consideration and thought.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, in light of the hon. member's comments, which I think are very valuable, perhaps what we could do is just ask that the draw be delayed until the parties have had an opportunity to have discussions on this particular subject which I think is very important for private members of this House, and we could ask for the consent of the House to do that perhaps.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I realize that my hon. colleague is going to soon ask for unanimous consent from my hon. friend in the Liberal Party. Our rule as a party, that is the New Democratic Party, has been to completely and totally not co-operate with the government because of the GST fight that we are waging.

Mr. Epp: This is Private Members' Business.

Mr. Riis: Let me get to it, Jake. I know you are anxious about that GST, but let me finish this conversation.

Because we are dealing with Private Members' Business—this has nothing to do with the government's initiative, it has to do with Private Members' initiatives—I would be quite prepared to agree to put off the draw until we have had a chance with each of the caucuses to examine the situation, deliberate further among the House Leaders and come forward hopefully with a standing order which we would all agree with, as opposed to the report. The report includes many items with which I have difficulty but I am sure that for 90 per cent of it we