

Private Members' Business

When exercising this important responsibility, the minister must carefully examine each individual request. Decisions cannot be made lightly, and a thorough understanding of all the facts is essential. The minister's decision must be based on a thorough analysis of all aspects of the case, in accordance with recognized legal standards.

For instance, when David Milgaard filed his first appeal, experts were called in to examine questions of a scientific nature and to give their opinion. Facts obtained from every possible source, including the lawyer's briefs, were carefully analyzed to determine whether there could have been a fundamental miscarriage of justice.

Mr. Speaker, the reports given by the media in this case overlooked a number of important points in connection with the first appeal. The Minister of Justice, however, analyzed them before making her decision. She cannot comment on the case in this House or in the media because she is prohibited from doing so by law.

One thing the minister considers frustrating in this matter is the tendency of some commentators in the media to report only part of the evidence in the Milgaard case and not to take account of how it fits into the total picture. Indeed, it is important to look at the case as a whole, from beginning to end, and that is exactly what several of the minister's senior legal advisers are now doing. It is just such partial and incomplete views of the affair that have given rise to misinterpretations and raised questions from some members of the House, which presuppose a certain view of the matter.

The minister considered the first request objectively, in accordance with the established legal standards, and will give the same consideration to any subsequent request, as she did with every case submitted to her in the past.

The Minister of Justice has the responsibility to ensure that justice is done. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the minister will fulfil this responsibility with the necessary objectivity, care and compassion.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member said there was insufficient evidence. Perhaps she could put this evidence before this House. She cannot just come out and say: "There is no evidence." We, in the opposition as well as other members and also the government member who spoke before me, want to know where is this evidence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair does not take a position in this kind of debate. It is a question of opinion. Speakers have had every opportunity to express their points of view and the Chair listens carefully to the points of view expressed on all sides. If other members wish to speak, they can rise and do so.

[*English*]

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, no other members having indicated they wanted to speak, I would seek the unanimous consent of the House to have the question put. We could put it on a voice vote.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member raises a point of order. This motion is not a votable item under the Standing Orders. Therefore I cannot grant the request made by the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

[*English*]

There being no further members rising for debate, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

[*Translation*]

It being 3.47 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 3.47 p.m.