

Time Allocation

House Leader, what difference it would have made to have given another 15 minutes and completed the two hours of debate on the Bill on April 27 or later. Is it not possible to wait a few more days in light of the great passion in this debate?

Of course, the Government was elected and has the right to govern its own affairs. However, it must also understand the frustration of Members on this side of the House who have worked in the committee for months.

The spirit of the McGrath report was to give more power to the members and, at long last, give them an input into legislation. The Opposition put 43 amendments, and 43 amendments were rejected by the Government. I respectfully submit that if that is the spirit of the McGrath report, we might as well bury it today.

Our representative, the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall), devoted all his time in committee in the belief that he could make the Bill better. I accept that many of the amendments are not acceptable to the Government, but surely a few of them could have been acceptable. Since they are not acceptable we are using the last resort.

If the Government wants to pass its Bill as is, if it does not want members to work in committee and propose amendments, and then rams it through when it returns here so there will be no chance to expose the amendments that were rejected in committee, I say to the House Leader that he will be in trouble because the Bill is far from finished. The spirit of today will be reflected in the months to come. I dare say to the Minister that if he thinks he will have his Bill sooner as a result of his actions today, he is wrong because it is far from finished. I very much regret the events that took place today.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on the same question that my colleague, the Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), raised earlier before you did what you did.

I guess that it is with a great deal of sadness that you refused to acknowledge my colleague and, indeed, the Member from the New Democratic Party on a question of privilege and proceeded as you did. I have had great respect and admiration for the Chair, but particularly for the individual who occupies the chair.

I suppose what is particularly difficult about your recent behaviour on this aspect is the fact that, just by coincidence, you were well prepared to cite precedents, as you say—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa—Carleton): Order.

Mr. Mazankowski: Order.

Mr. Dingwall: Perhaps the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski)—

Mr. Speaker: I think I asked Hon. Members that, unless they stand and put questions to the Chair, they keep remarks to themselves. The Hon. Member is making a point. It might be more helpful if the Hon. Member confined his comments to

exactly what it is that may or may not have been done correctly. The Speaker is not omnipotent and may well make a mistake. However, I know that the Hon. Member, no more than he would want to impugn the motives of any Hon. Member, would not want to impugn the motives of the Speaker. It should not be surprising that a Speaker who is trying to pay attention to the complexities of this place will often have authorities available. I would ask the Hon. Member to continue.

• (1640)

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I thought I was being heckled by the Deputy Prime Minister who does it quite regularly, despite his assertion.

Mr. Mazankowski: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did, if you want to call it heckling. I do not think any Hon. Member has the right to impute motives to any other member, particularly the Speaker, and he should recognize that.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I should like to respond—

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the Hon. Member, but the point which is being argued here is basically whether or not the Speaker was right or wrong in giving the floor, under the circumstances, to the Minister. That is the point.

I have suggested that that has been done in the past. I am listening to Hon. Members. Those of us who have been in this place a long time will recognize when people feel very strongly about something. The Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) referred to this particular Bill evoking strong emotions. The Chair knows that and understands that.

However, surely at this stage we could call upon our collective experience and allow Hon. Members to make their statements. The only thing the Chair is asking is that comments be directed to the specific point. No Chair will make the right decision all the time; the Chair could well be in error, but I am listening to the points which are being made.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, in my view the Deputy Prime Minister continuously likes to take cheap shots. The only one in this Chamber today who has impugned the motives of other members is the Deputy Prime Minister who sits over there. It is not Members on this side of the House; it is the Deputy Prime Minister. What can you expect, Mr. Speaker, from a used car salesman?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dingwall: What can you expect, Mr. Speaker? The civility about which he likes to talk in the scrums is just not there.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Dingwall: With regard to what happened, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier stood and repeatedly called to the order of the Chair—