

*S. O. 29*

I will just make this point. Because of this order agreed to—

**Mr. Hawkes:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Axworthy:** May I be allowed to complete my statement without interruption by this jerk?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Speaker, there has been an accusation made about the behaviour of the Government, that it is clearly intimidating someone. That simply cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged. There is no intimidation.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have the Hon. Member's point. I am sure the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry will try to keep his remarks as succinct as possible.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Speaker, after that unnecessary interruption let me just make this point. I recognize your admonition about the problem we are facing in these unique circumstances. Yet the House will be adjourning for 10 days and there will be absolutely no opportunity to continue discussion of this very important issue. Therefore I hope you will give it proper consideration and give Members of Parliament the opportunity this afternoon to debate it properly and see where the truth really lies.

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I rise, as you indicated, under the same provision of Standing Order 29 to argue very concisely that the situation would be alarming indeed if, as we contend, we now have another senior public servant of the Government of Canada, this one in charge of western diversification, adding to what the former Deputy Minister of Finance has already said, that regional development programs are going to be affected by the trade deal negotiated between our government and that of the United States.

If true, as we contend it is, this is alarming for western Canada, Atlantic Canada, and the northern parts of most of our provinces in particular. However, the key point with respect to the rules of the House is precisely the question of the adjournment. Today is the last day for debate in the House before we adjourn. We are supposed to be coming back a number of days down the road, but the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has said publicly, and I want to underline this, that there is every possibility an election could be called during that period of time. The traditional four-year period of the Government, as the Prime Minister has described it, is now up. He has said he would be expected to call an election barring some very exceptional circumstances which he said do not exist.

It is for those two reasons, Your Honour, that I suggest the application for a special debate falls within the framework of the rules.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have stretched the rules considerably to hear these applications because they arise over a matter of great importance to the country. I indicated that, at least on what I knew of them earlier, I was probably not too partial to ordering an emergency debate this afternoon. I have listened carefully to both Hon. Members. They are very experienced, one being a former Minister and a senior critic in his Party, and the other of course being the Leader of the NDP.

I understand fully the concern expressed by both Hon. Members and others during Question Period. I also listened very carefully to Question Period and, without sitting in judgment, it seems to me, and I know I was admonished by the reform committee not to give reasons for turning down an application, this issue is so important it may be helpful if I say why I am not inclined to grant the debate at this time.

First, as I said, I considered the matter very carefully when I received the first notice from the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry. I considered it very carefully today. I considered very carefully the exchange in Question Period. There was a difference of opinion in Question Period on this matter. However, it is extremely difficult for the Chair to think that it amounts to an issue on which there must be an urgent debate. The Deputy Minister may or may not have said something. In any event there are differences of opinion as to what he said. Of course, there will be different conclusions drawn from what he may or may not have said. Even given the very great importance of this issue it is very difficult for the Chair to decide that this afternoon there ought to be an emergency debate.

The Hon. Member for Oshawa raises another matter, and this is certainly speculation and not something upon which I can comment, that this day will perhaps be the last day of this Parliament. No one can be certain about that but it seems to me that in itself does not give cause to extend the sitting beyond the agreed order into this afternoon.

I want to say to both Hon. Members as well as others that I listened very carefully because the country has been listening very carefully to the debate in this chamber. I know there must be a very great temptation among other Members to get up and comment upon this issue. However, we have had Question Period. I of course have no more idea than anyone else what may happen in the ensuing days. There seems to be at the moment a very serious difference of opinion on what a senior official has said and the implications that flow from it but that is not sufficient at this time to order an emergency debate.

I thank both Hon. Members for the succinct way they presented the matter and I also thank the Parliamentary Secretary and others for their forbearance.