

Government Orders

Mr. Milliken: I didn't hear anything in what the hon. member for Kamloops said that indicated that support was withdrawn by his party. He supports those amendments also.

What I understand is that the member for Churchill has had a death-bed repentance of some kind and thinks he has to make more amendments because he somehow feels left out.

I say to the hon. member for Kamloops, who supported this bill on his own admission until the other day, that he should be standing up praising the government and allowing this bill to go through. Everyone agrees with it. The only person who has a problem is the hon. member for Churchill, and we all saw how he behaved the other day when he found that he was not going to be able to move his amendments.

Furthermore, I suggest that the hon. member for Kamloops knows full well that it would be out of order for the hon. member for Churchill to move amendments to this bill at this stage. The bill has been amended and passed in this House. The Senate amendments only are before us; we cannot provide other amendments at this stage to this bill. The hon. member for Kamloops knows that and I suggest he stand up right now and admit it. This whole thing is a facade and a fraud that he is trying to put over on this House and convince the Canadian people that somehow there is some kind of cover-up going on here, which there is not.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, methinks my hon. friend protesteth too much. He gets a little excited. We must have touched a bit of a nerve when we suggested that.

Let me explain what actually happened, because obviously my hon. friend was missing during part of the deliberations.

We are not debating a bill, we are debating a motion. My hon. friend should know that. Consequently when he said that we supported Bill C-79, we are not talking about Bill C-79 today.

• (1230)

We are talking about a motion referring to Bill C-79 today. He knows better than that, but is obviously trying to cover some tracks that are pretty murky at the moment.

While we supported Bill C-79—

An hon. member: Before it was amended.

Mr. Riis: Before it was amended by your friends in the Senate, yes, we supported Bill C-79. It was then altered and we do not support the alteration. From the day it came back from the Senate, my hon. colleague for Churchill, who was the representative of the New Democratic Party during consideration of Bill C-79, indicated clearly to my hon. friend the government Whip, the Government House Leader, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader and, presumably, similar counterparts in the Liberal Party that we had serious concerns and we were going to suggest we amend the motion.

My hon. friend then went to the law clerks who were drafting the motion. We communicated that to not only the Parliamentary Secretary of the Government House Leader, but the Deputy House Leader as well. He was waiting to hear back from the clerks in conclusion.

Our track record on this is perfectly clean, perfectly clear and perfectly straightforward. I have yet to hear from my hon. friends why they are supporting—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I think it is time someone put on the record the events connected with the motion before us which, in the Senate, led to a number of comments by senators which I feel are justified and to amendments that reflect an entity that is different from our own.

To be perfectly clear, the amendments before us today, which are being proposed by the Senate, deal with a situation that somewhat differs from ours in that the Senate's board of internal economy is not organized the same way. The Speaker of the House of Commons is both member and Chairman of the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons. That is not the case in the Senate. The Speaker of the Senate does not automatically chair the Senate's committee on internal economy which is, in fact, a Standing Committee of the Senate that regularly reports to the Senate. So the procedure differs somewhat from what is customary here in the House of Commons.

Second, the amendments confirm these differences and provide for intersessional authority. The point is, that when Parliament is prorogued, since the Senate's internal economy committee is a Standing Committee, it