

Chair had the authority to divide questions that were before the House. If I may, I will turn to the Speaker's ruling of that day. He said, according to *Journals* for Monday, June 15, 1964, the following:

I must come to the conclusion that the motion before the House contains two propositions and since strong objections have been made to the effect that these two propositions should not be considered together, it is my duty to divide them . . .

Bill C-130, as I have argued, contains more than one proposition just as the flag debate resolution did in 1964. In that sense, there is absolutely no difference and it is not correct for the Minister of State to argue that this precedent cannot be referred to in this case. It is a precedent and it buttresses Beauchesne's Citation 415(1) which states:

A motion which contains two or more distinct propositions may be divided so that the sense of the House may be taken on each separately. The Speaker has a discretionary power to decide whether he should divide a motion.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that if you read carefully the Minister's intervention, you will find that it is implied that there is almost no circumstances at all in which one could conceivably envision the Speaker being in a position to be able to intervene and order a piece of legislation to be split into its constituent parts. If that is the case, then Citation 415 of Beauchesne's should be struck out as being no longer applicable. I would suggest that quite the contrary is true. Although this power should be used with some degree of prudence, Citation 415 is still operative and can be invoked by the Speaker to restrain a Government's procedural excesses, and in this case, we have seen government excesses *par excellence*.

I would also like to respond to the argument of the Minister of State which was first made in Mr. Speaker Jerome's ruling of May 11, 1977, that the ability of Members of Parliament to bring forward report stage motions to delete certain clauses of an omnibus Bill allows those Members to effectively isolate those separate propositions or principles in a Bill and force a vote on them separately. There is no question that this may indeed be possible at report stage, but as the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) made clear in his intervention on this point the other day, we are now about to commence second reading, not report stage.

Beauchesne and Erskine May describe second reading stage as the most important stage through which a Bill must pass. It is approval in principle of the whole Bill, not a clause-by-clause consideration but approval of the whole Bill. How can we give approval in principle to a Bill that contains more than one principle? We cannot isolate these principles at this stage. It is at this stage first and foremost that the Bill must be split into its constituent parts so that we can cast judgment on these individual principles. That is a fundamental right of Members of Parliament and it is rooted in history. It is fundamental to the operation of this place and cannot so easily be tossed aside.

Last, the Minister argued that unlike the Energy Security Bill of 1982, Bill C-130 has no elements which could stand apart independently of the entire Bill. With all due respect to my hon. friend and colleague, that appears to be untrue. The

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

four principles I enunciated in my previous intervention could surely stand alone in separate Bills.

I do not want to unnecessarily prolong this debate. It is my belief that the 1964 precedent in combination with Citation 415 of Beauchesne's and buttressed by the four separate principles in the Bill presently before us can all lead to only one conclusion: in the interests of parliamentary democracy and the traditions and customs of the House of Commons, the Chair must exercise its clear and undisputed authority to divide the Bill so that we as Members of the House of Commons and the Parliament of Canada are not faced with having to vote on several propositions at one time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to intervene.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member. The Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) has a short intervention.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I was not here when the argument was made previously. Briefly, I had the experience of being involved in the bell ringing episode in a unique way. When the National Energy Program was introduced in one Bill, the bells were rung by the Official Opposition. Members of the Official Opposition did not show up for the vote and there was a parliamentary crisis.

I was involved in the negotiations for the settlement of that crisis along with Ian Deans, the then House Leader for the NDP, the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young), the now Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre), Mr. Erik Nielsen and for the Government, Marc Lalonde and Yvon Pinard, the then Government House Leader.

• (1550)

We were faced with the problem of what to do with a huge Bill. It was proposed that it be broken into, as I recall, 15 or 16 parts. We finally resolved to break it into eight Bills, I believe. The principle we applied was that of what parliamentarians would digest. You may call it digestibility. Could we digest the whole thing or did we have to break it into parts?

The energy committee considered all eight Bills. We did not have legislative committees then so the situation was a bit different. The solution we came to was to break the Bill into eight parts, to debate the eight parts together, and to refer them to one committee.

I do not think that is a legal precedent, but I thought I should bring my experiences forward to you, Sir, because your decision is obviously a very important one for the history of this House and the history of this country.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to have a chance to make a short intervention today although I have not usually taken part in these debates on points of order except when they touch me directly because I have high confidence in our House Leader, others of our caucus, and