

Speaker's Ruling

In terms of the second question, I will have to look into it. Presumably it had something to do with the break and other preoccupations, but I will look into the matter and get back to the hon. member.

This is of course a finance bill. As has been the habit concerning all bills coming out of budgets and so on, we have been sending them to the Standing Committee on Finance which, of course, would be the most expeditious way to proceed.

If there is unanimous consent of the House at this point, we can deal with the matter and have the bill referred to the Standing Committee on Finance which is set up and experienced. The appropriate members from each party are members of it. It can be dealt with in a most expeditious fashion by that committee.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, first, that is not a good excuse for the government not doing what it was required to do under the Standing Orders. I would encourage the government House leader to be a bit more attentive to what is expected of the government in terms of dealing with legislation. If the government wants to expedite legislation, the least it can do is follow the Standing Orders and do what is required.

The request which has come is this: Will we be prepared to send this bill to the Standing Committee on Finance? Perhaps I will use this occasion to make the following point, since I notice that my friend, the chairman of that committee, is present.

Members of the New Democratic Party argued long and hard that we felt that what had transpired in the Standing Committee on Finance was unacceptable. It was not the way in which a committee should be conducted. I think I said at that time that we would not be inclined to refer legislation that was destined by our Standing Orders to a legislative committee to go to the standing committee.

That situation still stands. I understand that nothing has changed. Our concern in terms of the implications of those decisions remain and, consequently—

Mr. Speaker: I would like to respond to the hon. member, and I will hear the hon. House leader in a moment.

What he says may very well be, but it is really not a matter to raise here in front of the Speaker. I cannot become involved in that. I know the hon. House leader

of the New Democratic Party would want to conduct his discussions on that subject with the hon. House leader and others.

I will now hear the hon. House Leader.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that Standing Order 113, which talks about setting up a legislative committee, states as well: “—the Striking Committee shall meet—”. I have not seen a letter from the New Democratic members of the Striking Committee asking that this committee meet. If it is in my files, I will get to it and make sure that the chairman is aware of it so that this committee can, in fact, meet.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I misunderstood that it was up to the New Democratic Party to provide all of the leadership in terms of moving legislation through the House of Commons. I made the error of expecting the government to take some initiative in terms of providing leadership. I will not make that mistake again.

Mr. Speaker: Whether there is consent or not, I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 16 minutes.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: On March 27, 1990, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands rose on a point of order to question the procedural acceptability of attaching a royal recommendation to the government's expenditures restraint bill, Bill C-69. The hon. member delivered a well researched argument, citing several precedents and making references to learned parliamentary authorities.

The hon. members for Kamloops and Gloucester, as well as the Minister of State for Finance, also made contributions on this issue.

That exchange assisted the Chairman in considering this complex issue which relates to a very fundamental element of our parliamentary system of government—the financial initiative of the Crown.

To many of our viewing audience, and indeed many of the hon. members of the House, the subject matter of the financial initiative of the Crown sounds like an extremely Byzantine and hopelessly complicated matter. However, if you will bear with me for a few moments, the Chairman will attempt to set out the issue in