

Mr. Gleave, seconded by Mrs. MacInnis, proposed to move in amendment thereto,—That Bill C-244 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the said Bill should be withdrawn and that the Government should consider introducing in its place two separate Bills, the first of such Bills to deal exclusively with the proposed special transitional payments, and the other of the said Bills to deal with the principle of prairie grain stabilization payments.

RULING BY MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before the Chair recognizes another honourable Member perhaps I should make some comments in respect of the procedural aspect of the motion by the honourable Member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave). I intend to invite honourable Members to assist me in deciding upon its acceptability. Perhaps it might be helpful if I read the motion which is as follows: "That Bill C-244 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the said bill should be withdrawn and that the government should consider introducing in its place two separate bills, the first to deal exclusively with the proposed special transitional payments, and the other to deal with the principle of prairie grain stabilization payments."

Without making a judgment I should like to point out that the proposed motion does not oppose the principle of the bill but suggests that it be divided. Honourable Members will recall what was said last evening by the Chair in respect of a point of order dealing essentially with the same question.

The matter of dividing a bill seems to attach conditions to its passage. The Chair must decide first if the amendment is acceptable. The Chair must keep in mind the factors enumerated last night in respect of dividing or separating particular portions of a bill. I would also invite honourable Members to assist me in respect of the suggestion that a reasoned amendment should be declaratory of a principle and, of course, must fall within the four corners of the bill. Let me refer again to the words of the motion. It states that the bill should be withdrawn and the government should introduce in its place two separate bills. With respect, it is my feeling that the honourable Member is not opposing the principle of the bill but is suggesting another way in which the government could deal with essentially the same subject-matter. Having said this I now invite honourable Members to assist me on this procedural question.

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MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If no other honourable Members would like to assist the Chair, I would be prepared to make a ruling on the amendment of the honourable Member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

I indicated initially, before inviting comments and assistance from honourable Members, the questions that the Chair had in mind. I want to thank the Minister and

the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for assisting me in deciding whether or not the amendment is procedurally correct. Perhaps I did not emphasize that one of my main concerns was that the amendment does not oppose the principle of the bill. I think it does oppose the form of the bill. Whether or not the bill is in a form in which Members would like to consider it may be a matter of argument among honourable Members, and I do not pass judgment on this. I do suggest, however, to the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and I do this with great respect, that Citation 382 of Beauchesne on which the honourable Member relies to a great extent deals with the matter of the principle of a bill. I should like to read the citation as follows: "It is also competent to a Member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a bill, to move as an amendment to the question, a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy or provisions of the bill..."

It seems to me that for the amendment to be acceptable procedurally it must be in opposition or adverse to the principle of the bill, not to the form of the bill. That is what gives me a great deal of concern. In essence the honourable Member's amendment says that the bill should be divided. It does not quarrel with the principle of the bill. It does, however, quarrel with the form in which the bill is presented to the House.

The honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre argued very forcibly that there is a difference for the Chair to take into consideration between the point of order which was before the Chair last evening and the reasoned argument that the Chair has now before it. May I say with respect that I find some difficulty in following the argument of the honourable Member to its conclusion. It seems to me that the Chair has a responsibility, whether the question is raised on a point of order or by means of an amendment, to determine whether or not it is procedurally correct and one that can be put to the House. The question last evening was whether or not the motion for second reading of the bill could be put to the House. This was raised on a point of order. I cannot see too much difference between the two methods from a procedural standpoint. It is the procedural question of course with which the Chair must be concerned whether it is raised on a point of order or in the manner of the amendment suggested today by the honourable Member for Saskatoon-Biggar in which he proposes that the bill should be divided and put to the House in a different form.

So I suggest, without repeating my initial concern but adding to it those remarks, that it seems to me that the opposition to the bill as set out in the honourable Member's amendment is an opposition to the form of the bill and is not in opposition to the principle of the bill. He is suggesting that the way in which the House should deal with it should be changed, and again that is a matter of debate, but it seems to me that it is not acceptable as a reasoned argument. Therefore, I have to rule that I cannot accept it.