

*Routine Proceedings**[Translation]*

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): I would like to speak, if I may, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order that was just raised. In my mind, the Official Opposition is perfectly entitled to allow any member of this House it pleases to speak on an issue that not only concerns a member from a party other than ours but also on which the hon. member in question had special knowledge.

We think it is an extremely open-minded thing to do to transcend party boundaries and draw on the parliamentary expertise of all members of this House so as to improve the bill under review and ensure it better meets the needs of the people for whom it is intended.

I do not think it is in the interest of the Reform Party to try and control or decide beforehand who should or should not be allowed to speak on this bill. We have willingly agreed to let the hon. member use speaking time which was ours. I believe there are precedents in parliamentary law in that regard. I think such a gesture serves democracy well, as it reflects unselfishness and care for first-rate legislative action.

• (1215)

[English]

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I made it clear earlier that we had no objection to the presence of the hon. member for Yukon there and in fact participating in the debate. The point I raise in this point of order is the fact that she was not a legal voting member of that committee.

Even though the chief opposition whip had signed the proper notice with the clerk, the fact is the member for Yukon was not listed as an associate member and therefore—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I think the member already made that point earlier. We do not need to hear points repeated.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I would like one short opportunity to intervene in this point of order as well.

I am an associate member of that committee. The leader of my party, the member for Yukon, was sitting on my behalf in the aboriginal affairs committee.

What this debate points out is that there could be a flaw in our standing orders that this House now has an opportunity to correct, knowing the difficulties that it puts in place for independent, associate or other members of this House who have an interest in committee work but who are not members of a specific committee.

On behalf of the member for Yukon and my party I want to thank the members of the Official Opposition for their co-operation and assistance in allowing the member for Yukon to participate in the way she was able to during that committee.

I think the work the members of the Official Opposition have done in this case should serve as an example of the change that we need to make in the standing orders so that we will be able to allow forms to be signed by someone who cannot sign a form, to allow for participation of other members.

Members realize that an associate member has no way to transfer his or her place at the table to another member and that the only means of voting is to take the place of a member who does have a voting spot which rests with the three major parties.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. colleagues, I wish to thank all the hon. members who have spoken on this rather sensitive question.

[English]

We are dealing with Standing Order 114. The matter gets before the House today because of the fact there will be a report presented from the relevant committee. The matter will be considered carefully, taking into mind all of what the members have said today and the Chair will make a ruling on it presumably on Monday.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS*[Translation]***CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2), I have the pleasure to present to this House, in both official languages, the first Canadian report to the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

* * *

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to table in this House today, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made recently by the government.

Pursuant to Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

*[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to table, in both official languages and pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), the government's response to two petitions.

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, on