

Standing Order 43 was developed. In itself it is good. It enables hon. members, particularly private members, to bring before the House matters of importance to them and the country. Without Standing Order 43 they would be denied that opportunity.

However, my hope that Standing Order 43 would prove to be something worthy of the institution has been degraded to the point where, when a motion under Standing Order 43 is raised, one solitary member can say "no"; "nyet", as if this were the Duma. When that happens, nothing further can be done. I am not going to identify anyone because I do not want to give him notoriety. However, today I had my eyes on him. I just happened to be looking in the direction of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and some distance behind.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: There is no identification in that, unless the hon. member wishes to be identified. In almost every case one person says no. We might as well have a gramophone record here. That would be more in keeping with the technological development of this House.

The point I make is this: Standing Order 43 has been fractured in consequence of the fact that one member can simply deny the opportunity for the discussion of important matters. Are we going to have the House of Commons denatured in this way? Is it not about time we made a rule that a group of members may say no by simply rising? Perhaps the number should be increased to ten. In that way Standing Order 43 could provide a better opportunity for private members. After all, that is one of the purposes of the House of Commons.

I know that during your term of office Your Honour has done everything to uphold the rights of private members. If Standing Order 43 is not changed, it will simply be a caricature of what it should be, and I suggest that before this session is over, and before Your Honour completes his present term of office, an opportunity ought to be made available to discuss this question so that parliament will become effective and so that the voice of one, even with all the attributes of a gramophone, will not be effective in stultifying this institution.

● (1522)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before giving the floor to the hon. member for Kamouraska (Mr. Dionne) I want to comment briefly on the two points raised by the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) that I am sure are very much on the minds of members of the House. The first relates to decorum. I think all members have had inquiries from the public who have now had an opportunity to examine the proceedings of the House to determine which of our parliamentary traditions are essential to the expedition of the nation's business in this chamber, and which are not. I think this is an important matter of introspection for all hon. members.

The second point relates to the question of some of our procedures, those specifically singled out for attention being

Bank Act

applications pursuant to Standing Order 43 for the unanimous consent of the House to deal with matters of urgent and pressing necessity. There are, of course, arguments on both sides about whether regular business should be set aside for motions advanced in that way. It is not for the Chair to go into them at this time.

I think we must all observe, however, that often the rules under which we operate are there for a specific purpose and sometimes are being stretched in order to accomplish a purpose not envisaged in our procedures but which is nevertheless an important part of the life of the individual member of parliament. I think particularly of the opportunity to address the House in a brief and specific way on grievances which may not be of national importance but which may be of great importance to the individual member. It is only with the utmost difficulty that time can be found in the schedule of parliament, which is already overcrowded, to provide for that. As a result, questions are often used in that way, and applications pursuant to Standing Order 43 are often used in that way. These are not satisfactory replacements for a grievance procedure of some sort which would not only give the opportunity to put the matter before the House but to get some sort of response in the circumstances on whether anything could or should be done. In my opinion we lack that procedure and often find ourselves in circumstances where we use other rules to accomplish the same purpose, but not in a very satisfactory way.

If the question of the satisfactory nature of applications pursuant to Standing Order 43 is to be examined, the more general question to be considered by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization is whether it is going to be altered substantially to deal only with matters in which some other form of the withholding of consent might be done. I would hope that the committee would try to find some other method by which legitimate attempts to raise matters of serious concern might be provided for the individual member of the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BANK ACT

AMENDMENT TO EXTEND OPERATION TO APRIL 1, 1979

The House resumed, from February 27, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen (for the Minister of Finance) that Bill C-16, to amend the Bank Act and the Quebec Savings Banks Act, be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska): Mr. Speaker, last evening, before the House adjourned, I explained during the debate on Bill C-16 the damage caused on our planet by this financial system which dominates virtually the whole world, and I made suggestions on possible changes. I also cited