

adjournment of the House under Standing Order 30 to deal with an important matter requiring urgent consideration.

The matter referred to in his notice is indeed very important and is held by the Hon. Member and several of his colleagues as deserving urgent consideration.

I must say, however, that the signing of such an agreement between Canada and another country for the defence of Canada could hardly be considered, in view of the present circumstances, as being really urgent. Clearly, the decision to sign or not to sign such an agreement is the prerogative of the Government. Hon. Members can no doubt complain that the matter was not debated in the House, but the fact remains that such an agreement is a policy decision that should be considered during ordinary debates.

Moreover, there will certainly be an opportunity to deal with this issue very soon, because there are two allotted days left for the consideration of the business supply during the current period.

I must therefore declare that the request made by the Hon. Member for Saint-Maurice does not meet the requirements of Standing Order 30.

[English]

IMPENDING SIGNING OF AGREEMENTS WITH UNITED STATES

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, as you know, I also filed with you my intention to move that three matters of urgent importance require the House of Commons to adjourn now in order that we can discuss, in order, the following questions. The reason I suggest that each case constitutes an emergency is that the signing of three agreements or treaties with the United States will take place over this coming weekend.

The three agreements are as follows: an agreement on the salmon fisheries; an agreement on the question of acid rain; and the agreement with respect to the matter raised by my colleague from Saint-Maurice (Mr. Chrétien), the North Warning System Defence Agreement.

I believe this is an emergency because the agreements in question have been debated and discussed by the Congress and the Senate of the United States but they have not been debated or discussed by the Parliament of Canada.

My second point is that there is in fact a serious disagreement over the intention of the North Warning System Defence Agreement itself. In fact, there is a conflict in interpretation between those learned commentators for the U.S. and certain members of the administration of the United States Government and the Government of Canada as to the ultimate results of the signing of this agreement. Therefore, this must be debated by the Parliament of Canada in order clearly to determine what will be the ultimate consequence.

Mr. Speaker: With great respect, the Member is putting me in terrible difficulty and he knows it. The Standing Order stipulates very clearly that his right to make a statement at this point is to present to the House the statement he has sent

me in writing. The Hon. Member for Saint-Maurice (Mr. Chrétien) presented me with the same difficulty. I am therefore attempting to allow the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) the same leeway that I allowed the Hon. Member for Saint-Maurice. The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain is now putting me in difficulty.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to you and the House if I am overstepping the bounds but I thought it important to point out why I consider the matter to be an emergency. However, I will not continue with that. I want to suggest, as I have indicated in the letter, that it is of vital importance that these treaties or agreements be looked at by the House in advance of the signing.

Mr. Speaker: With great respect, I take it that the Hon. Member for Saint-Maurice was indicating earlier that my disagreement was that I in fact granted the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain more leeway than I granted the Hon. Member for Saint-Maurice in diverging from the statement. That is fair enough.

However, Hon. Members will know in the future that applications under Standing Order 30 are to be made to the Speaker in writing. It is in that letter that the arguments should be made so that the Speaker may have some prior opportunity to think about the matter. The rule very clearly says that the argument made now should not diverge from that which is given to the Speaker in advance.

Indeed, the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain gave me notice of his intention to request an emergency debate on three important matters. As must be clear to the Hon. Member, the matter of substance which he has raised has already been dealt with in my previous ruling. As I have already indicated clearly, the concluding of an agreement is a policy decision and policy decisions are matters for normal debate. In addition, an application for a debate under Standing Order 30 should propose one subject only, a single specific matter on which debate should be concentrated. Proposing the same matter three times is not one subject.

I must therefore rule that this application does not meet the requirements of Standing Order 30.

Mr. Deans: On a matter of clarification?

Mr. Speaker: Is the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain rising on a separate point of order?

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a separate point of order because I did not understand the ruling. Would the Speaker clarify one aspect of it? I am not challenging the ruling, I am simply asking. The Speaker indicates that one cannot raise the same matter three times. I am raising three separate matters.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I misspoke. I concede what the Hon. Member is saying.

The point I was trying to make is that Standing Order 30 allows the raising of a specific matter for debate. If the Hon.