

Canada Elections Act

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to keep this discussion going much longer, but I am in a somewhat unique situation on motion No. 17 which stands in the name of the hon. member for Renfrew North-Nipissing East (Mr. Hopkins). That motion would allow the right to vote to teachers who are presently working under contract with the Department of National Defence but are still in the employ of their school boards. I had a private member's bill on exactly that issue in the previous session, and I have in this session.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Epp: I am simply saying that it would be my wish that we come to some agreement and we put the motion before the House, because it is my intention not to disfranchise those who can vote.

Mr. Benjamin: The minister is perfectly right. Amendments for which we ask unanimous consent are amendments put forward at the request of members of all parties. Some of them are for the convenience of the Chief Electoral Officer. I wish the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) had kept his seat instead of trying to impress the House with his knowledge of the rules. If you will pardon my expression, Mr. Speaker, he is fouling up the agreement at which all parties arrived. As far as I am aware, there is unanimous consent, if only everyone would shut up and sit down.

Mr. Hopkins: I am not surprised we have stopped at motion No. 17 because there has been considerable discussion about a royal recommendation. However, when the deputy House leader appeared before the committee, he undertook to obtain a royal recommendation for this motion, and he came back with it, for which I thank him. At the same time, I wish to state—as has been indicated by certain members on the other side of the House—that there was good rapport among members of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. I have spoken to representatives of all parties on the other side of the House and understand they agree to motions Nos. 16 and 17, for which I thank them. I simply suggest that we should go ahead and obtain unanimous consent.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest a way in which we could proceed. First, I propose that you make a ruling with respect to motion No. 1 which you indicated you do not favour. The case has been stated by the hon. member in whose name it stands, and I suggest Your Honour should make a ruling on it. Then I suggest we proceed to debate motions Nos. 2, 4 and 14 which you have grouped for discussion.

The other suggestion I make is that we agree to give unanimous consent on motions Nos. 6, 13, 15 and 16, but that we leave open the right to argue procedurally any of the other motions, such as motions in the name of the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. Dick), particularly those which Your Honour says go beyond the scope of the bill, rather than those which involve expenditure. In all fairness to the hon. member, he should have the right to argue the procedural admissibility of his motions.

[Mr. Scott.]

I think no one wants to foul up the understanding which was reached on motions Nos. 6, 13, 15 and 16. If there is any doubt about it, we can carry on debate on motions Nos. 2, 4 and 14 and deal with the others later. We are prepared to debate the ones Your Honour approves. We are prepared to deal with motions Nos. 6, 13, 15 and 16 on the basis of unanimous consent. But some of the others which Your Honour thinks are out of order are motions concerning which members would like to argue procedural admissibility, and I believe Your Honour will give them that assurance.

Mr. Cafik: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with what has been suggested by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I seem to be the fly in the ointment. Since all the other alternatives have been discussed, perhaps it might be best to go on to motions Nos. 2, 4 and 14 and then proceed to motions Nos. 10, 11 and 18. The reason I want to state that clearly, if I may, at this time, is that you have ruled against my motions Nos. 3, 5 and 7, ones about which I happen to feel very strongly. The reason I put them down in this way is that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, in a report made to the House on April 29, unanimously agreed to have them debated and the government left them out of the bill. I would like to be able to speak on them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will have a chance to put forward his argument if he can convince the Chair that the motion is acceptable procedurally. Whatever report the committee has made, and whatever the House may want to do, must be within the confines of our rules. This is what my ruling will be about. When I gave an indication of my opinion regarding these motions, I did not wish to stop any member from putting forward argument on his motion, which is the usual practice of the House and is one which I intend to follow.

It is up to hon. members to argue their case before the Speaker makes a ruling. That is something upon which I cannot disagree, so I accept the suggestion of the hon. member. I hope that when he argues his case, he will argue it on the procedural aspect of the motion and not on the reason for his presentation of the motion.

● (1602)

In order to find a way for this House to move more quickly, perhaps I can put to the House the proposal of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), that we call motion No. 1 and invite comments from the hon. member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) as to the acceptability of her motion. Then I will make a decision on that motion, and after that we will proceed with motions Nos. 2, 4 and 14. Then, because they have been grouped for debate, a vote on Motion No. 2 would dispose of all three of them. Then we could come back to motion No. 3. If there are some arguments to be made, I would listen to them and make my decision; then we could proceed.