

Canada Grain Act

The hon. member also argued the principle of the 24 hours notice. I think it is a very important principle. I submit for your consideration, Mr. Speaker, that the 24 hours rule, which appears many times in the Standing Orders, has already been established. It is one that has been used by the government on many occasions. It has also been used by the opposition. It states that any notice of an amendment or other business that is provided for under all of the Standing Orders that is filed with the table by six o'clock on the day preceding the proceedings is, in fact, deemed to have been filed 24 hours in advance of that sitting.

To add weight to that argument let me say it is well known—I am sure the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) and the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) know this—that on the days when the opposition have the privilege or the right to give 24 hours notice of a motion under the rules, the 24 hours requirement is considered to be met if the text is filed with the table by six o'clock the day before the sitting. Of course, in considering the notices that have been given, the rule has been complied with as far as Bill C-196 is concerned.

● (8:10 p.m.)

It seems to me that if we were to argue otherwise—and the hon. member for Crowfoot did argue otherwise—we would be changing a long-established principle. For that and a number of other reasons including, in my view, the need to get on with this bill, I hope that the hon. member and you, Mr. Speaker, will agree that all the requirements that are long-established have indeed been met both with respect to the 48 hours notice and the 24 hours notice.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has already made his argument on the point of order, if this is on the same point of order. I would hope we would not get involved in a situation wherein everyone would speak two or three times on the same point of order. I do not want to be unfair to the hon. member; I recognize it is an important matter. If he wants to speak briefly, to add to the points he has made, the Chair has no objection to hearing him, with the agreement and consent of the House. Then perhaps we should hear other contributors and I will try to give the ruling in due course.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): I appreciate your concern, Mr. Speaker, with regard to hearing new thoughts and receiving new guidance with respect to the ruling. I appreciate the position you are in, and I do not want to take the place of any member who may want to speak on this point of order. But you will bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, the fact that when instigating the point of order I rose somewhat hesitantly to suggest that this is a precedent and requires clarification of the rules under which we are now operating. Therefore, I did not make all my argument respecting clarification of the rules of the House but I made enough to entice other hon. members to contribute to the debate.

There are further suggestions that you, sir, and the House should hear respecting a full understanding of the rules. But before speaking on the rules I wish to say that after hearing the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) make his statement I felt rather small, as a member of the House, and felt that my problems were rather small in light of the problems confronting the government—in fact, confronting Canada—in this grave situation. Having said that, I would refer to Standing Order 75(8) which reads as follows:

When the Order of the Day for the consideration of a report stage is called, any amendment of which notice has been given in accordance with section (5) of this order shall be open to debate and amendment.

The particular phrase to which I would direct your attention is, “when the Order of the Day for the consideration of a report stage is called.” We are now at that point; we are now calling for presentation of the report stage of Bill C-196. I may have referred to Standing Order 75(5) before the supper hour, but for clarification and continuity I wish to read it now:

If, not later than twenty-four hours prior to the consideration of a report stage, written notice is given of any motion to amend, delete, insert or restore any clause in a bill, it shall be printed on a notice paper.

So I say to you, sir, that without any shadow of a doubt 24 hours notice must be given before amendments at the report stage of a piece of legislation can be debated in the House of Commons. Standing Order 75(3) reads:

The report stage of any bill reported by any standing or special committee shall not be taken into consideration prior to forty-eight hours following the presentation of the said report, unless otherwise ordered by the House.