

Government Orders

However, I believe, as it is germane to our discussions, it would be very difficult for those of us on this side to proceed with debate until such time as a decision is rendered by the Chair.

• (1120)

Perhaps by way of accommodating the Chair and my colleagues to the left, maybe there could be some disposition that we might adjourn to the call of the Chair in order that we may have the decision and then proceed. We are of the view, quite opposite from the government, that the motion is out of order. Until such time as we have an adjudication of the procedural argument, we do not believe that it would be prudent to proceed.

Therefore, I suggest that perhaps we could adjourn to the call of the Chair or until two o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops and then the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I would concur with the point raised by my hon. friend, the Liberal House leader. However, I am also aware that we have a legislative agenda that we might wish to pursue other than government business item no. 1. This is a complex issue, as we have argued, and a critical issue in terms of the precedent that will be set for hon. members to consider in the future.

On the list of scheduled business is Motion No. 5, consideration of Bill C-5. I would say, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, that we are prepared to move quickly ahead with this. It is an important piece of legislation and we would be prepared to begin debate on that immediately.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the hon. members with care. They will know that in order for the House to proceed with business, there are a lot of people involved. Therefore, to change the business quickly is always a difficult thing.

We have been in this situation before in this House, on several occasions, when we have been waiting for a Speaker's ruling. What we have done in all cases was to proceed with the debate and wait for the Speaker's ruling, certainly in all the cases that I can think of at the moment.

I would ask that we do continue with the debate. I am quite confident, having listened to the arguments today,

that the time of the House in debating the subject will not be wasted.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, just to perhaps help the Chair in deciding, and without getting involved in the cross-fire on the order of business, I understand the problems on both sides of the House.

I listened to the parliamentary secretary in a rebuttal in support of the motion. I am just wondering if I could pose a question to the parliamentary secretary who argued very persuasively on some of the points. I am not going to try to rebut his argument. It stands on its own merit and there are several points that I agree with which rebut some of the points made by the opposition.

Regarding the compelling nature of the precedent, I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary this question. In law, we usually never ask a question unless we know the answer. I did not hear the early procedure and perhaps I will be thrown down by my own question. My question to the parliamentary secretary in talking about a compelling nature is: Because there is only one issue here, as far as I am concerned, not all the other more refined arguments about motions in order or out of order and/or some parts of the motion staying mute because the House has already deliberated, and I tend to agree with the parliamentary secretary on that but in his discussions for counsel before he introduced the motion and/or what he said earlier today, and I missed part of it—can the parliamentary secretary give us any precedent from the Mother of Parliaments, where there has been a prorogation and a similar motion was introduced in an omnibus package to reinstate a certain number of bills in a certain form?

If he cannot, will the parliamentary secretary tend to agree with me, although he might not want to, that we can have such a compelling practice and tradition in the procedures and processes of this House that we do not try to make white black and black white by introducing this type of motion? In other words, is there another precedent for this?

When I first heard the argument upstairs on television, I could not believe it. The only argument that the parliamentary secretary made, and I understand the subtlety of the argument, was that there were ways to reinstate bills. I agree with that, but part of my question concerns the fact that, as far as I know the only way to reinstate a bill that was killed in prorogation, is by unanimous consent. I ask the question this way that