

Business of the House

In any event, I should like to ask that you seek the unanimous consent of the House that the motion as read be placed on the Order Paper for debate during the consideration of the report stage of Bill C-155, an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof.

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that any reasonable proposals for amendments at the report stage of Bill C-155 will be considered. But I also wish to make it quite clear I am not implying that we agree with the specific amendment for which he is requesting the unanimous consent of the House. However, although we do not directly agree with what he is proposing today, it does not preclude our entertaining other amendments and in some cases even agreeing with the unanimous consent of the House to having them put on the Order Paper before we consider amendments at the report stage next Tuesday evening. In the circumstances, we can not agree with the Hon. Member's request today. However, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) and myself are prepared to negotiate in good faith on any reasonable amendment, until we are asked to vote on the report stage of Bill C-155.

[English]

Mr. Mazankowski: Madam Speaker, this is a very genuine and sincere amendment that has been advanced. I understand that the Minister of Transport will be standing in his place at some point in time requesting that same unanimous consent to have one or two of his own motions, which were ruled out of order by Your Honour, put before the House.

I am pleased to hear that the Government House Leader has said that he is prepared seriously to entertain some of the amendments and proposals that we have to offer. This is one of those proposals that we have to offer which we believe could facilitate the debate and, indeed, improve the Bill.

I ask that you seek unanimous consent, Madam Speaker. If the Government House Leader and the Minister of Transport are serious in their contention that these very realistic, sincere and genuine proposals are going to be considered, it is going to be very difficult, Your Honour, if the Government is now going to proceed with its motion to move closure. Perhaps it might want to reconsider that in light of the comments of the Honourable House Leader.

Madam Speaker: The Chair is really embarrassed by what is taking place. This is a most unusual time to propose that amendments be introduced in the process of studying a Bill. Of course, if the House wants to do it and gives unanimous consent, all of this can happen, but I must say that it is a most exceptional use of the time that is allotted to discuss Government business.

There seem to be other interventions on this point. I would ask Hon. Members to be very brief because any kind of

negotiation of this nature that might go on between Parties should, of course, not take place in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I shall be very brief. I do not want to repeat what I just said. The request for unanimous consent has been denied. However, we are prepared to negotiate as soon as we have proposed our motion for time allocation this afternoon.

[English]

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I want to speak to the emerging point of order which the Chair has raised here, namely, the use of this period for asking the question the nature of which the Hon. Member for Vegreville raised.

I believe I heard you correctly when you said it was an unusual time to entertain questions on Government business. I heard the words "Government business" and, of course, it is House business which we are—

• (1510)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. No, I said it was a most unusual time to discuss possible modifications to a Bill which the House was presently studying. This kind of negotiation, I reminded Hon. Members, should take place somewhere else, but certainly not on the floor of the House. I did not rule out the Hon. Member. I was tolerant with the House and allowed the House to hear what the Hon. Member for Vegreville had to say. I allowed the President of the Privy Council to reply.

My impression is that the Hon. Member for Vegreville does not have the unanimous consent of the House. As I indicated, if the House wanted to do this, despite the fact that I find it a bit unusual to be doing it at this particular time, I could ask the House if it gives its unanimous consent and I would be in the hands of the House. Obviously, the Hon. Member did not receive unanimous consent so I suppose he will seek other means of accomplishing what he wishes to do.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, again you have said that you found it unusual to be discussing a matter such as the nature of the matter raised by the Hon. Member for Vegreville. It is to that point that I wish to address my submissions before the Chair comes to any firm conclusions.

In my submission, this is a most appropriate and proper time for this kind of discussion. I see you nodding your head in the negative. Perhaps after I have presented my submissions I might be successful in having you nod your head the other way.

Madam Speaker: No, really, the Hon. Member is raising a point of order when there is no point of order. I did not make a ruling on this. I just expressed surprise that such negotiations were taking place on the floor of the House, as I have done many times.

It is good politics, I suppose, good policy, for the Chair to be tolerant sometimes when the Chair senses that some kind of agreement might be reached, despite the fact that the proce-