

*Introduction of Bills*

another problem which will be of concern to the House in the long term.

We are dealing here with the situation where a Member is reintroducing a Bill in identical form that has been chosen once before in the draw and been considered by the Standing Committee on Private Members' Business. It has had one hour of debate in the House. In those circumstances the growing practice for Members who still care about the content has been to change the Bill and participate in a second draw.

In this particular case we are dealing with identical wording. I do not think that the problem will be solved today. It should be a future topic of discussion for the committee. It is not difficult to see that if we followed this practice to its logical conclusion we would reach the point where possibly all 20 Bills chosen in the draw at any one point in time could be issues on which the House has already had some consideration. That would not be in the spirit of parliamentary reform or in the best interests of the House.

If the Member chose to participate in a later draw to give himself more time to change the content, that would certainly be in order. From our point of view procedurally, simply missing the deadline on occasion for good reason should not be a reason for withholding unanimous consent.

The other issue is perhaps the broader and more important. If the Member were to reconsider and request more time to re-draft the Bill and place it in a future draw, the House would understand and appreciate that. But if the Hon. Member wishes the identical Bill to come forward into the draw, I can see that there might be some difficulty with that.

**Mr. Gauthier:** We on this side concur with the proposal that we revert back to that item in Routine Proceedings allowing the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) to table his Bill. The Parliamentary Secretary has made a valid and good argument that, if the Bill is in the same wording as was once dealt with by the House, and the House having pronounced itself, whether or not the debate ended with a vote is irrelevant. Having pronounced ourselves on a particular item and with the appropriate wording at that time, I can hardly see how one could retable the same Bill word for word and comma for comma and ask the House to again pronounce itself on the same Bill. I think there is a good argument to be made for redundancy. The House cannot be asked to pronounce itself on the same question twice in the same session.

I take the point made by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary about the committee looking into the possibility of amending our orders. At this time, I do not see that that would impact on the question at hand, which is to revert back to Routine Proceedings allowing the Member to table his Bill. Perhaps he will see the committee and eventually modify the Bill to meet with the requirements of good parliamentary procedure, which is not to present the same question twice in the same session.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before we revert to Routine Proceedings, I would like to point out to Hon. Members Standing Order 42(2) which states:

(2) The dropping of an item pursuant to section (1) of this Standing Order shall not be considered a decision of the House.

Therefore, in the case of the Bill of the Hon. Member, there was not a decision of the House on the first occasion. I gather there is unanimous consent to revert back to Introduction of Bills?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### PUBLIC EMPLOYEES POLITICAL RIGHTS ACT

#### MEASURE TO ENACT

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-277, an Act to provide for the political rights of public employees.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Shall the Hon. Member have leave to introduce the said Bill?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Cassidy:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Hon. Members. Perhaps the points that have been raised can be looked at by the Standing Committee on Private Members' Business for a clearer indication of what might take place in the future.

The issue in my Bill is one I have been pursuing since I came to Parliament in 1984. It is to ensure that on as broad a base as possible members of the Public Service of Canada and of related Crown corporations, et cetera, should have the ability to form, to be involved in political Parties, and to be involved in campaigns without the types of fears that they now undergo because of a very ambiguous situation.

In my constituency it is not even clear whether a public servant who works as a truck driver, or a secretary, or in some other job, can put up a sign for an election candidate. I believe that this creates difficulties for all of the Ottawa area Members, and also people in many other parts of the country.

I believe as a matter of basic principle that the rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms should be granted, and that is the purpose of this Bill, which I hope will be considered favourably by the Standing Committee on Private Members' Business when it has the draw this afternoon.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.