

Private Bills

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has already dealt with the point of order. In any case, I understand the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) has nearly finished his remarks, so that will automatically settle the problem.

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Speaker, on that point of order—

• (6:20 p.m.)

[*English*]

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I should inform the house that I did not take part in the discussion and therefore I took this bill at its face value, as I am sure you did, Mr. Speaker. The request was made to take up this bill rather than other bills and, as I said, I was very surprised to find that it was not what I had thought it was. This bill contains a couple of points which make it different from other similar bills. It may be that some hon. members are not interested in examining this type of bill. However, I think I have an obligation to point out that in my opinion there are differences between this bill and other such bills. I am prepared to let it go to the committee without further debate in the hope that an answer will be found there to some of the problems which can be raised legitimately in regard to legislation of this nature.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the said motion?

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the standing committee on finance, trade and economic affairs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gendron: Mr. Speaker, I had asked for unanimous consent so that the bill could be studied in committee of the whole immediately and the motion for third reading could also be passed.

Mr. Speaker: I must point out to the hon. member that standing order 102 stipulates that no private bill shall be studied in committee of the whole without a special reference. If the hon. member refers to standing orders and more particularly to the order I have just mentioned, he will note that it is extremely difficult to permit examination of a bill by the committee of the whole rather than by a special committee. Naturally, the house may make whatever decisions it wishes, but at this point I will call the attention of the house to the fact

that it is abnormal to proceed as the hon. member for Rivière-du-Loup-Témiscouata suggests.

Mr. Gendron: Mr. Speaker, would you have any objection if the house gave unanimous consent? Therefore, I ask for the unanimous consent of the house.

Mr. Speaker: Unfortunately, I believe the problem to which I have just alluded still remains, since the standing order reads as follows:

No motion for the suspension or modification of any provision of Part II of the standing orders applying to private bills or to petitions for private bills shall be entertained by the house until after reference is made to the committee on standing orders, or to one of the committees charged with the consideration of private bills, and a report made thereon by one of such committees and, in its report, the said committee shall state the grounds for recommending such suspension or modification.

The hon. member suggests that the house do precisely the opposite of what is stipulated in the standing orders. To my mind, the hon. members should think seriously of the difficulties which would stem, even with the unanimous consent of the house, from overriding a standing order which stipulates that a private bill shall be considered by a special committee rather than by the committee of the whole.

Mr. Gendron: I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

THE EXCELSIOR LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

On the order:

House in committee of the whole on Bill S-26. An Act respecting the Excelsior Life Insurance Company (without amendment).—Mr. Stanbury.

Mr. Stanbury: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Clearly there has been a misunderstanding about the order of business during this hour. Already half the private members hour has been taken up on a bill which many of us were led to believe was going to be passed without debate. The result of the misunderstanding is that only half an hour remains for discussion of this bill and whatever other bills might be taken up during the hour. The suggestion I should like to make for the consideration of hon. members is that private members' hour today be extended to 7.30 so that in fairness to those who have suffered by reason of this misunderstanding—