

Government Orders

• (1805)

The Deputy Speaker: There was a mistake in the form and I read the wrong bill. I asked if the House was ready for the question and I do not think I heard anybody say no.

Is the member indicating, and we always take a member's word on these matters, that he could not hear and generally wished to say that the House was not ready for the question?

Mr. Benoit: Yes, that is right, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair will always take a member's word on that. The hon. member for Vegreville.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that very much.

The Deputy Speaker: It seems to me the member has already spoken in this debate. Am I not correct?

Mr. Hill (MacLeod): No.

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe you had already called the question and that you had moved on to begin reading the question. In fact there was substantial agreement among the three major parties in the House that we would allow the debate to collapse at this point and have a vote on division on this question.

Perhaps the hon. member who just rose might want to consult with his whip before he insists on making a speech at this particular time. The fact is that the question has been called and we should then go on with the vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Does any other colleague wish to speak on this point of order, mostly including the whip or the acting whip of the Reform Party?

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, Reform had agreed that if the debate did collapse on the bill we would have the vote on division. However I was informed that the member for Vegreville intended to speak and had prepared a speech.

However in the din and the excitement between the speech of the hon. member for Lisgar—Marquette and the response of the member for Burin—St. George's I think he did not hear you, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, if the House would be agreeable, we would appreciate it if you would give him an opportunity to speak to Bill C-49.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I made some preliminary comments during my speech. I had intended to make a speech on the issue but I was informed there was an undertaking among the parties that there had been enough debate on the issue and that it was the general wish of the House to conclude the debate. I co-operated by sitting down and yielding 15 minutes of my time to allow the vote to go forward.

I think a deal is a deal. I appreciate the member for Vegreville would have liked to make some remarks on the matter. He should have told his whip or his House leader in due time so that could have been communicated as part of the deal. We had an arrangement here. We have observed the arrangement and in so doing I have forfeited my speaking time. I am sure there will be other opportunities for the member to participate in debate.

I would suggest that technically the Speaker has already put the question anyway. I believe the Speaker has effectively called for the question and I think we should get on with it.

Mr. Hermanson: The agreement was whether or not we would call a recorded division.

Mr. Simmons: I submit that the question has been put. I also submit that we had an arrangement and we should in honour stay with that particular arrangement.

Mr. Keys: Mr. Speaker, not with the intention of leading the Chair but rather making a suggestion to the Chair, it has been precedence in the past that in some cases where this has arisen the Speaker recognized the request by the hon. member who may not have had the opportunity to rise in his place at the moment that was important. What that led to was a request for unanimous consent of the House to proceed with the member's request to make the speech. Maybe that could be the compromise the Chair might want to reach on this particular occasion.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, for our part, we would be ready to vote. However, if I understand correctly, I believe that the government is adamant on having a vote today.

On the other hand, the Reform Party wants one of its members to be allowed to speak. I think that we are running out of time. If we could have unanimous consent to prolong the debate in order to allow the Reform member to speak before proceeding with the vote, it would be satisfactory to all of us here. We all know that the vote will be taken on division. I believe that if there were unanimous consent to do so, everybody would be satisfied and this would put an end to these incessant points of order, clearing the way for a real debate on important matters.

[*English*]

Ms. Catterall: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: If the member would take her seat for a moment, the time has expired for the debate unless there is unanimous consent from all the members not to see the clock for a few moments.

It was the Chair's understanding that there was an agreement by all parties to end the debate a moment before 6.12 p.m. and