

Immigration Act, 1976

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): —a notice of motion—which has as its premise the fact that there was consultation with the other Parties in the House and that they were unable to agree on a time allocation order. I regret to say that I took part in no such consultation for that purpose.

I have consulted with my colleagues, the Deputy House Leader of the Official Opposition and the Whip of the Official Opposition, who say that they did not take part in any such consultation. That being the case, I have to tell Your Honour that I think that the notice is defective. I suggest that if the Deputy Government House Leader wants to avoid some embarrassment in this matter he may want to consider withdrawing his notice.

Mr. Lewis: Not at all, Madam Speaker. I am prepared to advise the House that I discussed this matter with the Deputy House Leader of the Official Opposition. He indicated to me that the Official Opposition had no further speakers. I then discussed the matter with the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, who indicated to me that we would not have a vote on the Bill by six o'clock this evening. The discussions took place under those circumstances. I understand the position of the opposition Parties and I am sure that they understand the position of the Government.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Madam Speaker, I cannot let this go as it is. There was no official consultation on this matter. If the Minister believes that he can go around in the House and ask whether or not there are speakers and so on and believe that that is a bona fide House Leaders' meeting, then I think that he is wrong. I cannot say that I have been officially consulted on this matter. We gave him signals that we had not many speakers to go. As a matter of fact, after what I told him I am surprised that he has come forward with this notice of motion which states that at a formal House Leaders' meeting there was no possibility of an agreement between the Parties. To my knowledge that has not occurred. Therefore, the motion is defective.

Mr. Lewis: Oh, oh!

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): When I want to speak in the House of Commons, with all due respect to the Minister, I can state my position by myself without his help.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, this is a rather unfortunate turn of events at a crucial point in this very important debate. I think Your Honour will find that in fact the motion is defective in that in its introductory comment it states that agreement could not be reached. As previous speakers have already indicated, there was no attempt to reach an agreement.

To be fair to my colleague, the following questions were put to us: "Do you have speakers? Can we expect a vote on this Bill today?" My response was that as far as I knew we had enough speakers interested in participating in the debate that we would not likely be voting before six o'clock. However, that

is not my idea of a discussion with respect to whether or not we could come to an agreement, and perhaps we could, depending on what the Government had to offer.

I think it is important for Your Honour's purposes in ruling on the admissibility and advisability of this motion, since it states that an agreement could not be reached, to say that there was no discussion regarding an agreement. There was no attempt made to come to an agreement. Simply put, the question we were asked was: "Are there speakers to speak on this particular Bill or are there not?" There are obviously sufficient reasons to rule the motion out of order in that it was introduced inappropriately, in that it contains wording that is simply not accurate and which is in fact quite false.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I submit that there were discussions. No agreement was reached. In fact, the Standing Order simply requires that notice be given. Notice has been given. The notice states that the House Leaders were not able to reach an agreement. I submit that the notice is in order and that debate should continue, even if Your Honour wishes to reserve. If my colleagues wish to tell me how many more days or hours they need, then we will take that into account when we set the timetable with respect to how much more time is required.

The debate has carried on for some time. It is about time that we reached a decision in this place, a decision which the Canadian people are awaiting with great anticipation.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, the rules clearly intend that, if the Government is going to move a motion for time allocation, there has to be consultation with the other Parties. Consultation does not mean that the Government House Leader or his deputy go around asking whether or not the Parties have other speakers. Surely, that has not been the practice over the two and a half years that I have had this job.

I think it has been the case as well, since the rule has been in the rule book, that the Government House Leader, or the Deputy House Leader, meets with his opposite numbers and specifically asks them: "Can we reach an agreement on an allocation of time?" The rule does not intend, and as far as I am aware has never been used in the way that the Deputy Government House Leader has used it, that he skulk around and say one thing while intending another. If he wants to find out whether or not it is possible to reach an agreement or not as the basis for moving a time allocation motion, then he should have the guts to get together with his colleagues face to face and say to them: "I am asking you formally whether we can reach an understanding for the purpose of seeing whether there can be an order agreed to for the allocation of time. If not, I will take my responsibilities". He did not do that, and he has admitted that.

I want to say that it is obvious that the Deputy House Leader is under a great deal of stress already. I can tell him that it will get worse for him if he continues to act like this.