

there is also general agreement that the reforms have succeeded in making the House more workable and in enhancing the role of Members in policy formation and examination. We believe, therefore, that now is the time to enshrine these provisional orders into the permanent Standing Orders.

Today's debate is very important, indeed, historic. Moreover, it is very positive for the future of parliamentary democracy as it has evolved in this country. The election of the Speaker by all of us in this House by ballot is made permanent by the motion, with two changes. The 5 per cent of vote minimum requirement for each candidate as proposed by the committee is adopted with a change to require Members wishing to be a candidate for the speakership to write in their candidacy rather than, as was the case last September, to write that they are not candidates.

Here again, as with any system of parliamentary order and rules, we learn through practice, and establish our rules and regulations by precedent and by the application and interpretation of those rules.

As well, the legislative committees are made permanent with no change in their powers and mechanisms except for the priority and queuing process which all Parties agreed to last September after many Members, particularly those in the opposition caucuses, realized that the system was becoming overloaded. We are satisfying this concern of the committee's April 7 report which examined the reforms. I think we all recognize that the government caucus could have placed an impossible burden on the opposition caucuses by having a dozen legislative committee meetings all at the same time. We recognize that that would have ultimately been damaging to the institution, so we have agreed to the queuing procedure.

Then there are the major reforms provisionally in place since the spring of 1986 which we propose to make permanent with minor changes which, I submit, will lead to improved workability. The standing committees would remain, with all the new powers the House gave them, but with some minor changes dealing with when they are struck and how membership can be changed. Committee scrutiny of Order in Council appointees and nominees would be made permanent with a clear mechanism for obtaining curricula vitae for committees calling such people before them. The review of delegated legislation, which members have used only once, will become permanent as well. Later this year we will revise wording to suit the Standing Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments.

I want to touch on the types of so-called procedural reforms proposed by the McGrath committee in Chapter 7 of its final 1985 report. These were largely, but only provisionally, implemented in our current rules. We are making a change to only one of them and that is Routine Proceedings, and I will come back to that later because, unfortunately and regrettably, the Opposition have not been able to agree with this element of the motion before us today.

Standing Orders

We propose no change to the new process for Private Members' Business except for two improvements. One is to double the time for the speech by the Hon. Member moving any item to 20 minutes from 10 minutes. Second is the provision of a mechanism to allow private Bills, those from petitioners in the country, to be debated and, as the House wishes, enacted. The committee requested this, too. The special order agreed to by the House last December respecting how non-votable items may be relocated in the precedence list when a Member cannot be present has worked well and it, too, will become a permanent order.

The opposition House Leaders could not agree on behalf of their caucuses on either doing Private Members' Business at the end of each opposition or allotted day or somehow blending it into the day, so this is one proposal of the committee which we cannot accept. We will keep the *status quo* and not conduct Private Members' Business on those days.

• (1220)

The purpose was quite clear. Private Members' Business is not conducted on the 25 allotted days and the procedural committee and we, in our discussions, tried to find a way in which Private Members' Business could be conducted on days allocated for opposition debate. Unfortunately, I regret and I am sure many Private Members regret that we were unable to work out a solution which would accommodate that worthy objective.

As well, the motion proposes to remove any appeal to the House on a Member's request for an emergency debate. There is a provision where an appeal can be made if a Speaker finds a *prima facie* case of emergency under Standing Order 29. We sense that that was somewhat repugnant in as far as it applies to the stature of the Speaker, and any challenge would constitute a challenge to the Speaker. Therefore, we have removed that.

If the Speaker rules and finds an emergency under Standing Order 29, the debate will proceed on the basis of his or her assessment. It is made clear that once the decision is made and the Speaker rules on it, the debate is on.

If there is a debate on Friday, it will continue for up to four hours as on other days and will remain open to an extension by Standing Order 9(4), as provided for in the current provisional rules.

We have agreed to loosen up the format requirements for the presentation of petitions, again as the procedure committee requested.

With respect to the business of supply, my opposition colleagues agreed with us that it would be appropriate to move some of the spring opposition days to the fall and winter supply periods in order to give more balance to the timing of those debates. I believe we all have recognized what we have gone through in the last month or so, with 13 opposition days compressed into a very short period. We tried to work out a more suitable arrangement to even out those days.