

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 13, 1987

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

### PETITIONS

#### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Government's response to Petition Nos. 332-1229, 332-1241, 332-1242, 332-1264, 332-1265, 332-1271, 332-1273, 332-1279, 332-1303 to 332-1333 incl., 332-1455, 332-1573 to 332-1611 incl., 332-1625 to 332-1627 incl., 332-1675 and 332-1681.

In addition, I move, seconded by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski):

That the House now proceed to Motions.

**Mr. Speaker:** I advise Hon. Members that under all the circumstances the Chair is prepared to hear argument on this motion because I anticipate there will be Members wishing to speak to it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly am interested in speaking to the issue whether the House should proceed to *Motions*, which is only one of the many items before the House. When the House is dealing with *Routine Proceedings*, it has an opportunity to receive reports from members and from Ministers. It may proceed with various items such as tabling of documents, Ministers' statements, reports of inter-parliamentary delegations, tabling of committee reports and petitions. Mr. Speaker, we believe that the Government, by moving this motion, is trying to prevent us from presenting our petitions. The Government's motion concerns a proposal to proceed with that stage of the proceedings during which the Conservatives will be able to present a motion for time allocation for the debate on Bill C-22.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that this Government is so incapable of putting its house in order that it must resort to arguments that are so transparent and so unacceptable to the minority. Indeed, as the minority, we cannot vote in sufficient numbers to threaten or defeat a Government we believe is

incompetent. The Government is short-circuiting *Routine Proceedings* by moving to proceed with a motion advising the House that the debating time for Bill C-22 will be shortened and that closure will be imposed on the proceedings after a day or two of debate at the report stage and third reading.

Mr. Speaker, the House should realize that if the Chair accepts the motion and it is put to a vote, it means the Chair will have prevented Ministers from making their statements, inter-parliamentary delegations from making their reports, committees from tabling their reports and members from presenting their petitions to the House. We will have prevented Bills from being introduced and we will also have prevented the introduction of public Bills originating in the Senate.

The Acting Prime Minister says it is a fiction. Not at all, Mr. Speaker. It is not a fiction but an extremely unpleasant disposition by the Government which wants to short-circuit debate and, between now and the Easter recess, wants to impose the will of its massive majority. A Government that would have us believe that for the sake of its friends, those people who have been putting pressure on the Government to accelerate the adoption of Bill C-22 . . . Everybody knows the Government's purpose is in essence to proceed with consideration of Bill C-22. Everybody knows that is why it wants to impose closure on the remaining stages of debate, namely the report stage and third reading. And that is why I find it hard to accept that the Government should short-circuit all routine proceedings just to move this motion.

Now exactly what is the meaning of what the Hon. Member just did? We are concerned here with a very important procedural matter, namely whether what we have before the House now is a measure that, with the various measures I mentioned before, including, tabling of documents, Bills, committee reports and petitions, comes under *Routine Proceedings*. Each stage of *Routine Proceedings* is there for a purpose, and it is up to the Government to meet certain commitments on which agreement has been reached with the House. *Routine Proceedings* may provide an opportunity to table petitions, for instance. And what the Government is doing here, Mr. Speaker, is short-circuiting the whole business and saying, more or less, that "*Motions*" is what they want to consider today, and forget the rest. In fact I find the Government's attitude rather disagreeable, considering its number of members: they know there will be a division, we will be back here in half an hour to vote and they will win. They have the numbers, 211 members against our 40, and the NDP has only