

Government Orders

of other U.S. servicemen had demonstrated that the lives of American citizens, in Panama by right of treaty, were in jeopardy. On December 16, 1989, the Panamanian National Assembly declared the country to be in a "state of war" with the United States. In the circumstances, the United States' Government invoked Article 51 of the United Nations' Charter, which permits states to use force in self defence. The Government of Canada expressed regret that the situation had deteriorated to the extent that force was required. The Government of Canada acknowledged that the use of force presented a dangerous precedent, but recognized that the situation in Panama was unique.

The question of whether the Government of Canada sought a legal opinion before expressing support for the United States' military intervention in Panama, and related questions concerning the nature of any such opinion constitute a request to render public the confidential advice provided by the Government to the Prime Minister. The confidentiality of this information is protected under the Access to Information Act.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The questions as enumerated by the Parliamentary Secretary have been answered.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES RESTRAINT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Tuesday, March 27, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-69, an act to amend certain statutes to enable restraint of government expenditures, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have two quick points of order to raise.

Earlier in the day the government House leader asked whether there was unanimous consent to extend the

sitting by, perhaps, an extra hour considering that we had taken up some time with Routine Proceedings. At that time I might have been a dissenting voice. I think what I said may have been misrepresented.

I, too, am prepared to consent to extend the hour of sitting tonight.

Mr. Speaker: I asked the House if there were any negatives and the hon. member for Kamloops said: "Yes". It led to some confusion. However, I am glad that the hon. member has now clarified it.

Mr. Milliken: No, we are not agreeing to that.

Mr. Speaker: Oh, he has clarified his own position.

We have consent on the government side and we have the consent of the NDP. Do we have the consent of the Official Opposition?

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not prepared to give that consent right now. I wish to consult with my colleagues briefly and report back to the government House Leader or the deputy government House Leader. But, at the present time, I am not willing to provide that consent without any form of prior discussions having taken place.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the consultations.

I have another point of order. We are about to resume debate on Bill C-69. Now that the government House leader is here, I would like to bring to his attention Standing Order 113(1) which reads:

Without anticipating the decision of the House, within five sitting days after the commencement of debate on second reading of a bill which is to be referred to a legislative committee, the Striking Committee shall meet to prepare, and shall report not later than the following Thursday, a list of members of such a legislative committee—

• (1620)

Mr. Speaker, as you well know 11 sitting days have elapsed since the commencement of debate on Bill C-69. That is more than twice the maximum time allowed under this Standing Order. The question to the government House Leader is this. Why has appropriate action not been taken since the debate on Bill C-69 commenced some days ago?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, let me say, first, in terms of the question of extending the hours, the offer still stands.