

Fisheries Act

stances, I gave the floor to the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) who had already spoken on his motion. At this stage however, there is simply no procedure whereby a member can speak more than once, even if he wishes to close the debate. That has to be taken as a rather extraordinary occurrence.

For the benefit of the House I should like to settle a procedural question on motion No. 3. I was endeavouring to do so before one o'clock in order to assist hon. members in planning their schedule of work for this evening. Motion No. 3 is an amendment of the minister and proposes to add conditions to the power of the minister to prescribe an order in clause 8. The condition that is sought to be added is an offer of consultation with the provinces before that takes place. In committee, I am aware that the chairman ruled that amendment out of order on the basis of a precedent I had set in relation to the immigration bill only a few days previously. In reading the two clauses it is not difficult to understand why the committee chairman would make that ruling. The language of the two clauses is similar and it seems to me it would be difficult for the committee chairman to resist a comparison between them and therefore to follow the precedent set in the immigration bill and rule this amendment out of order.

Upon reflection, however, it seems to me that the conditions are somewhat different. In the immigration precedent the statute had put forward by way of a general authority clause all of the authorities the minister required in order to behave as the minister responsible for that particular statute. It was a general authority clause which every statute of that sort must have in order to see to it that the minister is clothed with the appropriate authority to operate all the programs contained in the statute.

To that clause of general authority for the minister, it was sought to add that the minister was required to consult with the provinces before the implementation of some of the programs. In that circumstance it seemed to me it added an entirely new concept of the statute. In this situation, however, the conditions are somewhat different for indeed what is prescribed here is not the general authority section of the minister but rather a specific power of the minister to prescribe an order under certain circumstances and in certain conditions. The amendment therefore seeks to add another condition. Therefore, it is quite different from the precedent that was taken from the immigration bill.

● (1300)

In any case we are again faced with the desire already expressed by the House—for indeed there has been a desire expressed by the opposition—that there be greater consultation with the provinces, and in these circumstances the minister is attempting to give some credence to that expression of goodwill by enshrining it in statutory language. In the circumstances there seems to be an intent of the House that the matter be debated. Even if I were to be left in some doubt on the matter as to its procedural regularity—and in fact I am

[Mr. Speaker.]

not—it is always incumbent on the Chair to attempt to resolve the doubt in favour of the matter being discussed in the House.

Because I think the conditions are different and the precedent does not apply as exactly as it first appeared, although I understand perfectly the reasoning of the committee chairman in following the precedent, and secondly because if I were left in any doubt I would resolve it in favour of discussion, and finally, because there has already been an indication that if there were a procedural irregularity, which I do not find, the House would want to discuss this motion in any case, I think it appropriate that the motion be put before the House for discussion and that it be found to be appropriate on procedural grounds.

Is the House ready for the question on motion No. 1?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: Those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

I declare motion No. 1 carried.

Motion agreed to.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDER RELATING TO REPORTS OF AUDITOR GENERAL

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, may I raise a matter that has been discussed with the other parties having to do with an amendment to the standing orders, but not one that causes problems in principle. It reads:

That Standing Order 65(1)(q) be amended by deleting the semi-colon at the end and adding the following: "to which the Public Accounts and all reports of the Auditor General shall be deemed to have been referred, immediately the said documents are tabled;"

The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that the public accounts and reports of the Auditor General are automatically referred. I would like to move that motion and have it adopted.

I have another point of order which may commend itself to the House.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the motion of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). Is it the