

Motions

assurance. At that time, I would have no hesitation in giving my approval to the proposal of the government House Leader that we extend the Provisional Standing Orders for a few more weeks. I would hope that the House Leader would come to us with some meaningful changes in the next seven or eight weeks dealing with certain things in the committee's last report which we have all found urgent and pressing.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I think it should be made clear that when an all-Party agreement to extend the provisional orders was sought, it was sought not on the basis of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure dealing with the subject matter just raised by the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier). It may or may not be a good idea for the committee to look at that particular subject; it probably is a good idea. It is a good idea for the Standing Committee to look at anything that is a matter of controversy in the House. However, the origin of the extension of the provisional rules lies in the fact that there was not enough time between the time the committee charged with reviewing those Provisional Standing Orders reported and the time for the expiry of those provisional orders on April 16 for the House Leaders to get together and respond.

Because I am a member of that committee, I want to make my understanding clear as I participate in the unanimous consent that will be required to pass the motion. We are giving the House Leaders time to study the report of the committee so that they can then decide what they will do about the Provisional Standing Orders when the new expiry date of May 29 arrives. All other matters are matters which will be referred in the course of ordinary parliamentary time, either by the Speaker, by the House or by the committee itself, to the committee. I think it should be perfectly clear that, without questioning the merit of what has been raised by the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier, it is a matter separate from the reasons for agreeing to an extension of the provisional rules.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) addressed this point because that is exactly the point I intended to make.

Notwithstanding the good intentions of the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), I think we are simply extending the time period so that the House Leaders can have more time to deal not only with the report of the Standing Committee but indeed with the work that has been done by the House Leaders themselves.

I think today's ruling is an indication that there are some flaws we must address. The fact is that a lot of work has been done. This has not been treated idly. I know that on both a formal and an informal basis, the House Leaders and their support staff have been working on it. We now have the report of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure which will be incorporated into that work. We are simply asking for a period of time that we can utilize effectively to address some of the obvious imperfections we have detected over the course of the last few months. Hopefully we

will be able to incorporate them into more permanent Standing Orders which will govern the conduct of the House for the duration of this Parliament. I do not wish to prolong the debate on this issue. I think the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill has put the whole issue into focus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the comments which the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) has just made.

On this side of the House, we have no objection to extending the provisional Standing Orders up to May 29. However, we would like to be assured that during that period, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure will be considered in the House.

The report was unanimously agreed to by members of all Parties. That report includes a host of improvements to our Standing Orders. And since the Deputy Prime Minister has just stated, to use his own words—

[*English*]

—hopefully we will be able to incorporate the report. I would like him to be a bit more precise and to tell us that the Government will bring about, between now and May 29, a debate in concurrence on the report of the committee.

The bottom of page 8 of the report of the committee indicates that the committee has dealt with the Provisional Standing Orders and the committee recommends that the Provisional Standing Orders adopted on February 13, 1986, with the modifications set out in Appendix "A" of the report, be made permanent. In other words, the committee would like this report to be concurred in.

I would like to have the assurance of the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) that his Party will support a unanimous report of the Standing Committee. The majority of the members of that committee are from his Party including the chairman who is very honest, straightforward and non-partisan. Nevertheless, the participants on the committee from the NDP and the Liberal Party including myself agreed with the suggestions in this report, including the suggestion for a better and more viable way to operate legislative committees. It was recommended that a system of six legislative committees be adopted. I would like the Deputy Prime Minister to react on behalf of the Government and to tell us if the Government can live with the recommendations of this report.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, we have just received the report. At first glance, some of the proposals make obvious good sense. There are some areas with which we have concern, but this is a matter that will be discussed at some length with the other House Leaders.

This is a matter that does not simply involve the Government, but it involves as well the support and co-operation of the House Leader of the New Democratic Party and the House Leader of the Liberal Party. This is so, notwithstanding the fact that this is a recommendation of a committee which