

*Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The hon. member has been here now for six years—

**Mr. Milliken:** No. Two and a half—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Two and a half years. It seems like six years anyway. I just want the hon. member to know, and I do not think I have to direct this to him, because he is knowledgeable about the procedures of the House of Commons, that you do not talk about who is and who is not in this Chamber. The fact that they are outside watching you on television, or looking after constituency work, I would hope that the hon. member would carry on with this very interesting debate. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I was careful at the end to make reference to the presence of the three that were here. I thought that I was referring to their presence, not to the absence of the other 160, but that is beside the point.

I want to turn to the arguments advanced by the parliamentary secretary yesterday in the course of the procedural argument about the propriety of this motion. I want to say how outrageous his arguments were and I want to expose them for what I suggest is a fraud on the people of Canada in what he said.

• (1710)

I want to turn, first of all, to page 651 of *Hansard* for yesterday where he said:

We have precedents. We have precedents of reinstating business in this House of Commons. We are dealing today with a different process but the precedents are very clear.

There are no precedents for this kind of motion to be debated in this House. I searched back to 1938—the parliamentary secretary was invited to produce his precedents—and I could find no precedent where a motion to reinstate a bill had ever been debated in the House. On the occasions when such a motion was presented to the House, it was agreed to by unanimous consent. There was never a debate. There was never the moving of a motion and a vote. There was never closure used on such a motion. Every single time the very particular and special procedure of unanimous consent of all members was sought and obtained before any bill was reinstated.

The principle of unanimous consent is a very fancy, unusual practice. It may happen often, but it is very fancy and very unusual. It is very particular, and it allows this

House to do almost anything that this House could possibly do.

It has been used in the past to allow the government to get around having to go through all stages of a bill. What the House is in effect doing is saying that we agree that this bill has passed through the stages up to a certain point. Beyond that point, we will then discuss it.

They are saying to the government: “You do not need to go through each of the stages with debate”. It is a short-circuiting of the normal legislative process, but it has always been done by unanimous consent. Yet, here the parliamentary secretary said there were precedents. He was asked to produce a precedent. He has never produced a precedent. There is no precedent. This is a violation of all past practice.

The hon. member for Kamloops, in an extremely able submission, pointed out that even the *Précis of Procedure*, in this House, an excellent publication that I know members of the staff of this House have worked on for many years. They have produced an excellent volume. It has indicated that the practice of this House through 124 years has been to require unanimous consent for the reinstatement of bills.

Yet, today we are witnessing a gross breach because it is not one bill that the government is moving on here. It is five bills. It already has two by unanimous consent in this session. Since May 13 when we started again, two bills have been reintroduced by unanimous consent.

The second reading stage was avoided on both of them. I think on one report stage was avoided as well. Fine. We agreed to that. All members of this House agreed. Every single one permitted the bills to go to that stage, but that is not the case today.

Now we have five bills being moved forward in this way. The government says: “Not only are we going to force those five bills to be put into the House at these stages, but we are going to move closure on the motion because we are not going to permit discussion of the merits of this motion and the putting of the five bills”. That is a particularly disgraceful aspect of the current proceedings.

The second point he raised was at the bottom of page 651. He said that there were precedents for another matter. He said:

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you check through your precedents you will find one which says that what has happened here is that the House has taken action on a part of a motion and therefore that part of the motion becomes mute, becomes silent.