

Members of the House and to ensure that this Bill is broken up into its appropriate constituent parts.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware this is not the first time that the procedural acceptability of an omnibus piece of legislation has arisen in the House. On January 26, 1971, the then Hon. Member for Halifax-East Hants rose on a point of order to object to the introduction of Bill C-207, an Act respecting government organization. In his argument the Hon. Member stated, at page 2760 of *Hansard* for that day:

If we were to pass Bill C-207 and it became an Act of this parliament, there would have to be 10 separate entries made in the index of statutes passed this session. There would have to be nine consequential amendments to seven additional statutes that are amended by schedule B of this measure, and these would also have to be indexed separately. I am suggesting we have a measure here that covers the waterfront.

Further in the argument on this particular point of order the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre, Stanley Knowles, offered the following insightful observation, as recorded at page 2762 of *Hansard*:

—it is not a very giant step from this to one bill which would include the work of the whole session. The government could bring us here and while we were debating the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne a huge omnibus bill could be brought in for the improvement of life in Canada . . . So, I say that in terms of the operation of Parliament this point of order is very important. How far can government go in combining a host of different subjects into one Bill and ask Parliament to vote on them en bloc without any regard for the individual points?

That is a conversation that many of us have had in the last few days. Recognizing that if we were to proceed in the fashion that the Government is proceeding with regard to Bill C-130, presumably we could conduct all of the business of the Government of Canada within one large omnibus Bill. For that reason, we are very concerned in terms of the way the Government is proceeding at this point.

Mr. Speaker Lamoureux, in his ruling on this point of order later that day, made the following observation, as recorded at page 2768 of *Hansard*:

—where do we stop? Where is the point of no return? The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, and I believe the hon. member for Edmonton West, said that we might reach the point where we would have only one bill, a bill at the start of the session for the improvement of the quality of life in Canada which would include every single proposed piece of legislation for the session. That would be an omnibus Bill with a capital "O" and a capital "B". But would it be acceptable legislation? There must be a point where we go beyond what is acceptable from a strictly parliamentary standpoint.

I think that that is the critical point that is being made here. There is a point where we go beyond what is acceptable from a strictly parliamentary standpoint.

Speaker Lamoureux was saying that indeed there can be Bills that are out of order because they are omnibus in nature. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that this point gave your predecessor much cause for concern. He expressed this concern in relation to Bill C-207 that sought to enact or amend 18 or 19 statutes. Bill C-130, which the Government wishes to call for debate at second reading today, seeks to amend a whopping 27 statutes. Mr. Speaker, if the scope of Bill C-207 gave Speaker Lamoureux so much concern, then I would suggest that Bill C-

130 should cause much greater doubt in your mind as to its procedural acceptability.

Several years later on May 11, 1977, the Hon. Member for New Westminster rose on a point of order to object to the omnibus nature of Bill C-51, a Bill dealing with amendments to the Criminal Code, the Customs Tariff, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act, and the Prisons and Reformatories Act. At that time he sought an order from the Chair, as permitted by Citation 415(1) of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, to divide the Bill. In his ruling Speaker Jerome made the following observations, as recorded at page 5523 of *Hansard*:

I think an hon. member of the House ought to have the right to compel the House to vote on each separate question.

Speaker Jerome then went on to argue that the then Standing Order 75(5), dealing with the ability to move amendments at report stage to delete certain clauses of the Bill, allowed Members effectively to isolate those sections that the Member thought ought to be voted on separately. However, without attempting to cast any doubt on the validity of the ruling, I would simply like to point out that at the moment we are about to commence second reading, which is debate in principle on the entire Bill. At this point Members are asked to cast judgment, not on specific clauses that they can isolate by way of amendment, but on the entire Bill.

• (1210)

On February 10, 1982, the then Hon. Member for Yukon rose on a point of order to object to the procedural acceptability of Bill C-93, an Act to amend the statute law relating to the certain taxes and to provide other authorities for the raising of funds. The argument advanced by the Member for Yukon at that time was that Bill C-93 unnecessarily joined together three separate Bills, two tax initiatives arising out of a Budget, and a traditional request for borrowing authority. During the course of his argument, Mr. Speaker, the Member made a most perceptive comment that I would like to repeat here today. At page 14865 of *Hansard*, the Member is reported to have said:

What we have here is a continuation of the Government's practice of surreptitiously closing off and guillotining debate, not through the open invocation of Standing Order 75 or pure closure, but by means of a constant testing of the House and of the Chair with new legislative combinations. If one step works, then the Government goes a little further the next time. We are moving with slow and steady stealth in a direction the Government dares not openly avow or pursue.

The only difference between the Hon. Member's observations in 1982 and what we are seeing today is that this Government, rather than moving with stealth, is moving quickly and openly in its attempt to muzzle debate and crush the Opposition, and when it cannot do that within the scope of the rules as they exist now, it seeks to suspend these rules. It is quite simply, as I see it, government by force with the Opposition left to appeal to the Chair to ensure that an ancient and historic right to be heard is not tossed out in the Government's zeal to impose its will without adequate debate.