

Member that the situation we are facing here is one that has come about as a consequence of a unique series of events, including, of course, the unanimous consent to bring the Bill in and including, of course, that a number of days of debate have gone by.

The Hon. Member says that he has only just seen the agreement referred to in the legislation and he cannot speak to the Bill. That might well be. I say that sincerely. But the Hon. Member will have another opportunity to speak. It may be that as time goes on he will find time to look at the agreement and may feel that he is then in a position to speak. If something happens that the Hon. Member is denied the right to speak as a consequence of anything that has transpired then the Chair will hear him again.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised and shocked at the arrogance of this Government, after two and a half hours of debate during which we tried to explain that Bill C-37 is defective as to form and that the date it contains for the tabling of a document, January 19, 1987, is wrong. We will have to amend this Bill.

As for the item on page 2, we spent two and a half hours on a fairly comprehensive debate on Standing Order 108 which clearly says that the Government may not introduce a Bill that is incorrect or incomplete, with blank spaces. And now this Government is calling the same Bill after a two-and-a-half hour debate. How stubborn can you get? They refuse to understand that the Bill is defective and that it will have to be reprinted and amended to conform with the standards of the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand why this Government doesn't show some common sense and do what it has to do, namely, call another order of the House, since our speakers are ready.

I think it is incredible they should persevere in this blind arrogance and maintain before the House a Bill that is incorrect and defective as to form and that infringes our Standing Orders.

[English]

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I want to echo the points which have been made by a number of those on this side of the House. It seems to me very, very unfortunate having had quite a serious, careful and I think thoughtful debate about the problems that present us procedurally with this Bill.

Let me make it clear that what I think is unfortunate is that the Government has brought this Bill forward nevertheless. I think in the tentative ruling you have just presented to the House it is not possible to have a vote on the Bill today. I assume that also means debate will not be completed on the Bill today. It seems to me pointless for the Government to bring this forward and to expect a debate to take place. As things could very well exist, we could all simply sit in our places and no debate would take place from now until four

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o'clock and by your ruling it would not be possible to move to a vote. Neither would it be possible to cease having speakers in the future. I really do plead with the Government to see sense in this case and to move to another piece of legislation which will permit us to carry forward discussion and to make at least some minimal use of the few remaining minutes of today's session of the House of Commons.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In speaking to the point of order as to whether it is a matter of a point of order or a matter of privilege as to accessibility of the Bill to Hon. Members in preparing themselves for the debate, which is the issue now before you on a point of order, I would not for a minute have gone ahead with the debate if we felt it would prejudice the rights of anybody to enter into discussions.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can assist the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary. The Chair felt that there was a point of privilege on the question of the accessibility to the agreement raised by the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata). I have ruled on that. I said that it may well be that he cannot speak now because he has not yet had a chance to look at the Memorandum, but that there may come a time when he will be able to speak. If, however, as time went by a Member for some reason due to what has happened could not speak, then I would hear him again. If something has happened that strikes the heart of whether a Member can be heard or can speak, then that, of course, would get very close to privilege. That is the position the Chair has taken. I might also point out to the Parliamentary Secretary and to other Hon. Members that Standing Order 22(2) reads:

Government Orders shall be called and considered in such sequence as the Government determines.

The Government is within its rights to carry on with Bill C-37 this afternoon if it can.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to enter into the debate since I have waited patiently for an opportunity. If other Members find themselves in an awkward position, since I believe we are in the 10 minute period for speeches, I would be prepared to alleviate them of the necessity of scurrying through their notes to debate. I would ask for the floor if all points of order and privilege as to whether or not the debate should proceed are finished. I have some interesting comments—

Mr. Gauthier: Just a minute. Are you on a point of order or are you speaking to debate?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I know the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Gauthier) usually likes to wait until I have a chance to recognize him.

Mr. Gauthier: Yes, I am usually polite.

Mr. Speaker: I recognize the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary on debate.

Mr. Gauthier: No. He was on a point of order.