

Point of Order—Mr. Knowles

Beauchesne's citation on the same subject has already been given by the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) but for clarity I shall repeat it. This is citation 198 of Beauchesne's fourth edition: "A motion should not be argumentative and in the style of a speech, nor should it contain unnecessary provisions or objectionable words."

That is the essence of it. It should not be argumentative, it should not be in the style of a speech and it should not attempt to build a case for the motion. Once you open the door to that kind of motion, you will find yourself in a most difficult position in terms of conducting this House of Commons in proper order. It will tend to cause disorder, obscure the essence of the debate and allow Members of Parliament in the course of putting motions on the Order Paper to plug the Order Paper with long statements with respect to alleged acts of commission and omission; the sins of the government, the sins of the opposition, and the sins of splinter parties such as the NDP, Social Credit or libertarian. That is the essence of his statement.

I hope once Your Honour has a chance to consider this she will see the validity of my contention. This motion is almost an analogous situation to that dealt with by Mr. Speaker Michener. It was rejected because of the argumentative nature of the motion. He suggested that, had it been in a different form, it would have been accepted.

That was a debate with respect to a budgetary provision. Important as that is, I reiterate that this is on the Constitution of our country. This is a debate in which Members of Parliament have a particular vested interest. When speaking on the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister said he had a special message for members from western Canada. He said in that message that because there were no government members elected in western Canada there was a special responsibility on members from western Canada to articulate the hopes and aspirations of the people of western Canada.

In that spirit there are many members in this House who have not had that opportunity. They are being deprived of it because of the Draconian measure being taken by the measure to curtail debate arbitrarily, for whatever reason. Second, as I pointed out, the motion offends against the privileges of members of the House of Commons because we are not able in the normal parliamentary tradition to bring in our amendments, legitimate though they may be, our suggestions for improvements and suggestions for deletions to improve this resolution. We are to be deprived of that because there is no provision within the motion to allow those amendments to be brought forward. If you want to go back to the least important element which is almost laughable, we go back to the suggestion of tabling of speeches. It is more in accordance with the practice of the United States Congress where it is permitted, but not in any parliamentary system developed on the tradition of the British Parliament. Parliament means to participate, debate; it is a forum for free expression, and I think for those reasons I humbly submit that you, Madam Speaker, should find this particular motion out of order, reject it out of hand and let us get on with the nation's business.

● (2130)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, the issue with which we must deal today is in fact fairly simple. We must determine what is the true value and effect of our authorities' citations, more specifically Beauchesne's, because the arguments put forward by my hon. colleagues opposite are based exclusively on Beauchesne's citations. And it is important, I think, if we want to limit ourselves strictly to the question of procedure and law which must be relevant here, to try to answer this question to find the solution to this so-called problem.

Beauchesne's citations, with all due respect for authorities, are not the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. They make it possible for us to understand better previous decisions and regulations, as well as the traditions and customs of the House of Commons. I suggest that Beauchesne is a lot less conceited than some of the hon. members who have participated so far in this debate would have us believe. One need only read the preface to this work to discover what the editor was trying to do, and I quote from page V of Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, fifth edition:

Our decision was based upon the fact that it was a Canadian book dealing directly with the parliamentary procedure in our House of Commons. It had a system of numbered paragraphs for quick reference—

And here is where it becomes more important:

—and, of course, some of its citations were still useful in interpreting the rules and practices of the House. Initially, our task involved deleting the obviously outdated citations—

What does that mean, Madam Speaker? That means that from time to time, when we look into the fourth edition, the third edition, the second edition and the first edition, we realize that at one point or other some citation was dropped because it had become irrelevant, for as time passed the rules had changed, practice had changed, in line with the new parliamentary ways.

So Beauchesne does not deny the right to evolution. Beauchesne does not go as far as my Progressive Conservative colleagues do in denying any evolution of the parliamentary procedure. Beauchesne simply establishes the present rules or practices, it does not say that rules cannot be changed. Quite the contrary. It does not say either that the practices cannot be changed. It states the opposite. It does not say that tradition cannot be changed. The reverse is implied. And this publication is in itself an example of this, since in its five editions, Beauchesne was revised five times to adapt to the facts. One only has to read on in the preamble from Beauchesne to put the citations back into the right context and avoid giving a narrow-minded interpretation of some of them, which would likely distort their meaning. It reads as follows: