

*Routine Proceedings*

be allowed to make a reasonable statement with the appropriate time for the opposition members to follow if they choose to do that. It is a simply request; a yes or no from them will suffice.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to pursue my point. When I said that the government had a chance during Routine Proceedings to have Statements by Ministers, my critic, the member for Papineau, was not in the House at that time. He is now here. He was in a meeting with NGOs. The government knows that. Everybody knows that we are meeting today with the NGOs across Canada. That is an important meeting for us. I do not know why the government cannot get its act together and co-ordinate things so that we can have an organized day and a fruitful meeting with people who are very important to us.

The member for Papineau is here now and he agrees that it is so important to Canada that we could probably, by unanimous consent, go to Statements by Ministers and have a response from all sides.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can be helpful and resolve this impasse. To be fair, let me first of all say that the parliamentary secretary was accurate in his comments and I have to take that criticism, we did oppose the government's initiative to introduce the goods and services legislation yesterday.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Riis:** I cannot apologize for that, that is a fact. I appreciate that the Secretary of State for External Affairs wants to make a statement today on what I think we all agree is an important matter.

Let me suggest this: We will certainly give our consent to proceed and to agree that the minister should make his statement at this point with the understanding that at the conclusion of the minister's statement and response from both opposition critics, we would automatically revert to Routine Proceedings and proceed as we would normally do during the day.

I am prepared to say that to allow the Secretary of State for External Affairs to make his case.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona on the same point of order.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, if the government regarded the ability of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to make his statement—which in any other context I would welcome, and I have often welcomed the willingness of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to make ministerial statements—then it could have moved to Orders of the Day after the minister made his statement. That was the next item under Routine Proceedings, and the government did not do that. The government itself has brought about this situation.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The parliamentary secretary asked for unanimous consent. I gather that there is consent from the official opposition. There is, in a sense, a conditional consent from the New Democratic Party, so I would ask the parliamentary secretary to respond to the conditional consent from the New Democratic Party.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, the very reason I moved the motion to proceed to Orders of the Day was to prevent what happened to this House of Commons yesterday happening again today. So we asked to move to Orders of the Day. We have asked for consent, without condition, for the minister to make his statement and the critics from the two parties to respond. They can simply say yes or no. Let it be on their heads.

**Mr. Riis:** I am prepared to make it simple, Mr. Speaker. No.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** On a point of order, the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Let me just understand this, Mr. Speaker. I am asking clarification from the House. Do I understand it that it is now the position of the New Democratic Party that when the foreign minister of Canada wants to come into the House of Commons to bring the House of Commons up to date on developments in Cambodia, on matters of Indo-China, indeed, on other questions of foreign policy, that for reasons of procedural, petty politics by the NDP, they deny Parliament the opportunity to discuss parliamentary and foreign policy business?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue and we have to understand what is happening here.

I appreciate the kind gesture of the Secretary of State for External Affairs early this morning. He notified both opposition parties that he was prepared to make a