

And a date:

—next”.

What we have there is a circumstance in which the House has made a decision and then by motion we can come at it again, at the same stage.

What I am essentially arguing is that what we are dealing with here are the effects of a prorogation, a precedent which has been established in the past with not a new process, but a process which is completely in order.

I want to conclude by making these four points. There is precedent for reinstatement of business in the House of Commons. We have done it before by suspending Standing Orders, by consent of the House. We have done it before by unanimous consent and we did it just last week by unanimous consent.

To bring business back into the House is clearly precedented. We are talking here only of process.

Second, citation 412, subparagraph (1), page 150 states:

The question is the subject matter of the motion, and on the merits of that subject matter the House has to give a decision either unanimously or by the majority of the members present.

In other words, there are two ways we can go on a motion. We can do it unanimously, which we do from time to time, or we can do it by division. The end result of that vote is the conclusion of the argument. In fact, that is what we are doing here today.

We could have done this unanimously. We could have saved ourselves an hour and fifteen minutes of House time. We could have been debating any one of these bills, for example. Instead, the House has chosen not to do it unanimously but to debate it and then divide on it.

Perfectly in order. A perfectly logical way of proceeding, and in fact that is what citation 412 of Beauchesne says. That is in fact what we are doing.

The third point concerns the argument that we are doing something unique and peculiar. One of the unique points of our particular Standing Orders is that from time to time we suspend our own Standing Orders, we suspend our own rules. We do that sort of thing regularly. In fact, if you look at the rules and forms of the House of Commons of Canada, with annotations, comments

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and precedents and so on, from 1958, it says in Item X, which is the way it is designated on page 11, that: “The House may even pass an order prescribing a course of procedure inconsistent with the Standing Orders. A motion for such temporary suspension requires notice”, and it goes into particular Standing Orders.

We have done that sort of thing before. We have the precedent, we have reinstated bills in this House of Commons before by suspending Standing Orders, by unanimous consent. We have another process. There is nothing wrong with the process that is before us today.

It really boils down to one simple argument. Yes, we could go back and go through these five bills again. We could debate them once more, at tremendous cost to the House in time, at tremendous cost to the taxpayers of Canada, who are saying to us as members of this House: “quit fooling around, get serious, do some business, cut out the partisan games”. We have heard it on all sides of the House. What we have done today is not in any way to cut off debate but rather to allow this House to continue the debate at precisely the same point it had ended debate prior to prorogation.

I have listened to my friends. I listened to them carefully and quietly. I wanted to hear their argument. However, there has not been a single compelling argument that would allow the Speaker to proceed to find this motion out of order.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary and I thank other hon. members. I have listened very carefully to this debate. I hope it is going to help me in making a decision. The hon. members would not be surprised if I said that given the complexity of this and given the precedents that have been cited and the authorities that have been cited, that I should reserve. I will try to return to the House as soon as possible. In the meantime we should probably proceed with the debate.

I will do everything I can to return as quickly as possible with a ruling. The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I fully understand. I am sure that members in the House will want to co-operate with the Chair if the Chair wants to have time to reflect upon the interventions made by all members of Parliament, and I would concur with that.