

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 30, 1988

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

POINT OF ORDER

TIMING OF SECOND READING MOTION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, it is understood that later this morning we will have an opportunity to raise various points of order concerning the Bill to implement the trade agreement, Bill C-130, and it is my understanding that these points have to be raised prior to the calling of the motion for second reading of the Bill.

I want to make very certain that, through some inadvertence, we will not actually get to the point where the motion is called before the points of order on Bill C-130 are raised, thus making it impossible, in the light of various precedents, to argue these points of order.

I want to have an assurance from the Government House Leader that this will not be done as far as he is concerned, and that you, Sir, will be very vigilant to ensure that somehow or other the motion for second reading is not called before these points of order can be argued.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to give my hon. colleague the assurance that it is our intention simply to trigger the debate on the procedural acceptability of Bill C-130, if in fact my hon. colleagues have anything to raise at that the time, and the Government has no intention of actually calling the order today. Once there has been discussions on Bill C-130 at the procedural level only, I would expect—and I do not mean to anticipate your decision—that you might want to reserve and have an opportunity to consider the arguments.

As soon as the debate or discussion is finished, it would be our intention to move immediately to continuing debate on Bill C-129, the privatization of Air Canada. That would be the business before the House today.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that prior to getting to Government Orders of the Day, after we go through Routine Proceedings, the Deputy House Leader for the Government will rise to indicate the Government's intention to bring forward Bill C-130, and it would be at that point that you would entertain

remarks regarding the appropriateness of this legislation in its present form.

Mr. Speaker: I am grateful for the interventions of Hon. Members and of the Minister of State (Mr. Lewis). I might reply first to the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray). The Chair, of course, always has a duty to be diligent that the points of view that are necessary for the working of this place be heard. In the circumstances, I think the Chair is assisted by the arrangements and the understandings, at least, that there are at the present time between the Government and the Opposition. I am answering the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) as well and the Minister of State in this respect.

I will proceed to call, at the end of Routine Proceedings, Orders of the Day. I will then wait until I see whether Hon. Members wish to rise. I am anticipating that that will be the case. I think it would be appropriate first to recognize the Hon. Member for Windsor West. I will then recognize the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap, and then I will recognize the Minister of State who will address the Chair with respect to the Government's view.

The Minister of State said that he did not want to anticipate my ruling, and properly so, and I appreciate that courtesy. However, I want to indicate to the House that certainly at the moment, it is not my intention to give an immediate response by way of ruling. It is my intention to consider very carefully what will be brought before me later on. I think Hon. Members can anticipate that, unless something quite extraordinary develops, the Chair will reserve and will return to the House at some appropriate time.

So far as the Chair is concerned, it would be completely inappropriate to proceed with debate on Bill C-130 until the Chair has returned to the Chamber with a ruling or we have, if necessary, some further argument or further questions.

• (1110)

In any event, I fully understand the importance of this matter to all Hon. Members, and I want to assure everyone that every diligence will be exercised. However, it is also important that Hon. Members and the public realize that this very important matter is proceeding in a manner, which is a credit to this place, as a consequence of an understanding so that we will have a debate under civil circumstances and the Opposition need not fear that something will be done in an impetuous manner or in any way to take the Opposition