

Canada Flag Day

ostensibly debating Bill C-136, we shall preclude the possibility of a number of members taking part in the debate. I wonder, therefore, if we could not arrive at this moment at an agreement to discharge these two bills, and, if there is unanimous consent, tell the parliamentary secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Reid) to move a motion that could be debated and voted on at the end of the hour.

In response to the problem raised by the last speaker, I wonder if the proposed reference to committee as suggested by the parliamentary secretary could not include the subject matter of these two bills or the establishing of a holiday in the period between the New Year and Easter. In other words, my suggestion, since what has been proposed so far has not been accepted unanimously, is that the House should now agree to discharge these two bills and that there be debated in this hour an order to the effect that the subject matter of these two bills or the question of a holiday between New Year's day and Easter be referred to the appropriate standing committee.

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Speaker, I would be quite agreeable to what the hon. member has proposed if he will withdraw the word "or" and use the word "and".

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): With pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

• (1610)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Stevens: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As some hon. members know, I also have a bill dealing with this general subject matter which I hope will be presented for second reading in due course. I am referring to Bill C-150, an act respecting discovery day. Perhaps we could include the three bills in the suggested motion and have this whole subject matter, including what I would like to say about discovery day, referred to the same committee.

Mr. Nelson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I support what the hon. member opposite said with regard to the subject matter of the bill. It was never my intention, and I think the bill is quite clear on this point, that debate be polarized on the question of which figure in history the bill should commemorate. It was simply and solely a request that a legal holiday be instituted on February 15 or the following Monday to commemorate our official Canadian flag. This was the sole intention of the bill.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I would agree to the suggestion that has been made following my original suggestion that we discharge these three bills. Perhaps I could move a motion which the House would debate and we could then vote on it at five o'clock. The motion I would propose would be that the three bills be discharged and that the subject matter of a national holiday from, say, the end of January to the end of March, the two months in which we in Canada do not have a national holiday at the present time, be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs for further discussion. If that is agreeable to hon. members, I would be prepared to move such a motion.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I am sure hon. members do not want to spend the hour discussing a decision on which we do not seem to be making progress. The only way we can do this is by asking whether hon. members are prepared to accept the proposal of the parliamentary secretary and of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that the subject matter of the two bills appearing on the order paper as items Nos. 1 and 2, along with the possibility of selecting a day for a national holiday in the period from the end of January to the end of March, be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. Is there agreement to this effect?

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): There does not seem to be agreement.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I realize the position that the parliamentary secretary is trying to protect, but it seems to me it is not really fair to the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) to ask him to discharge his bill in favour of this motion when the proposal is that the period within which this holiday is to be established does not include the day that he suggests, which is January. We are not deciding it here. The committee will, I am sure, come up with just one day. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary will accept the wording of the hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria (Mr. Corbin) that the proposed holiday be in the period between New Year's and Easter.

Mr. Reid: I am prepared to accept that, Mr. Speaker, providing that it says "one holiday." I do not think I could defend a proposition where we end up with three national holidays in one year. If that is acceptable, I will certainly accept an amendment of that nature to my motion.

Mr. Nelson: Mr. Speaker, may I say, on the point of order, that we must be careful in selecting the date because several provinces have now instituted what they call a mid-winter break in March. To my way of thinking, a holiday in March would be superfluous.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, I wish to have it clarified that the motion proposed by the parliamentary secretary will include the three bills, including Bill C-150 with respect to discovery day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The motion would read that the orders for second reading of Bill C-136, Bill C-195 and Bill C-150 be discharged and that the subject matter of a national holiday in the period of February and March be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): January, February and March.

Mr. Reid: January, February and March.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Yes, that the subject matter of a national holiday in the period January, February and March be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.