

house leaders, so that there can be a discussion immediately after the railway legislation has been considered.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, it would seem that there is a general consensus of agreement that both bills should be brought before the house prior to first reading. After all, they are related to each other, so I hope there will be agreement to this course. We could then proceed with our discussion on the first bill. We agree with the suggestion that the Leader of the Official Opposition has made.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I understand there is general agreement in the house as to the circulation or distribution of what has been called the railway bill even before the introduction of this bill in the house. Is that agreed?

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, so there will be no confusion later, I sought to ask the Leader of the Opposition a question. Would he agree that the resolution stage grants permission to the government to present a bill to the house for its consideration?

Mr. Diefenbaker: But we are waiving rights and rules now.

Mr. McIlraith: Yes. I think what is in order, is to waive debate on the resolution stage so that the government will have permission to introduce and give first reading to both bills. As I understand it, that is the point.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement with the proposition now put forth by the Minister of Public Works?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I think the question at this time is to secure the unanimous consent of the house to bring the two bills before the house. If this was the sole question, I, for one, would agree but the fact is that the standing orders carry new provisions that the house leaders may also agree on setting a time limit on the discussion. If we agree to eliminate the resolution stage, it means that less time will be available to consider this legislation. And if, later, the house leaders unanimously agree to set a one- or two-day limit on each stage of these two bills, it may mean that we, the independents, may be entirely deprived of the opportunity to express our views on either one of these two bills.

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In this case, Mr. Speaker, I feel that before the unanimous consent of the house can be given, we, or at least I, should like to know whether it is the intention of the government house leader to proceed in accordance with the new standing orders in such a way as to set a limit on each stage of consideration of the two bills and I should also like to know whether we, the independents, will have the opportunity to speak on these bills which we consider important and on which we would like to have an opportunity to express our views.

[English]

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, a question seems to have been directed to me. There have been no suggestions made that the opportunity of a member to debate these measures should in any way be abridged or restricted. It was the procedural matter of getting the bills before the house which was under discussion. There was nothing done by the house leaders that would limit the right of a member to debate either bill.

● (3:50 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I should like the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McIlraith) to make one point clear. He has told us that there has been no consultation with a view to limiting debate at each of the stages. I should like to ask the Minister of Public Works if he will give the undertaking that discussion will not be limited at any of the stages and that we will have the opportunity to speak on these bills.

[English]

Mr. McIlraith: That is a matter for the house, Mr. Speaker. The procedure is there in the rules. I cannot envisage a situation where hon. members would take such a lengthy time in debating either bill that those rules would have to be used. But I would not think of giving any such guarantee on any bill in advance. With debate just started, I cannot see any possibility of this provision being used.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The question for the Chair now is whether we should terminate consideration of the item before the house, which is motions. If there are no further motions, then this matter could be raised under introduction of bills. I would think it is the will of the house that we conclude the item of motions