

Business of the House

been made between the federal government, the provinces and the companies involved. It requires legislation to be passed.

I think it is fair to say that all of us take our work here very seriously. But when the government announces that it is going ahead with this project, it is simply assuming that, not only the House of Commons but the Senate will pass the legislation, I do not think that that assumption ought always to be made. As a matter of fact, the Senate is not even in session any longer. If the Senate were to do what it presumably plans to do, and that is to keep the bells ringing indefinitely, this legislation we are discussing now, Hibernia, would never occur.

When the government suggests that the project will go ahead and guarantees that legislation will be passed, that does not provide much incentive for us here in the House to take our job very seriously. So I simply want to summarize by saying that if the government wants the co-operation and support of the opposition parties, I think it is in their interest to recognize that there are stages through which legislation must pass. We are not even beyond report stage with the Hibernia legislation and from here it goes into the other House.

Time after time we have seen the present federal government consider Parliament to be a nuisance to their agenda. This adds to the public perception that this government would just as soon not have Parliament in session and simply announce their initiatives by decree.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the arguments of the hon. member which, of course, were just a reiteration of what we had heard a few moments ago. The fact is he did not bother to respond to the very simple statement that these funds had been approved, were sitting in the COLA fund, and it is those funds that are being used for startup. I do not know why they insist on ignoring the facts and continue with the rhetoric, trying to present once again an image which is both false and misleading.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, to the point of privilege raised by the hon. member for Shefford, I am of the opinion that the matter being raised now was really a matter of debate. That is not to say that the Official Opposition does not find itself on many occasions agreeing with the notion

that this government is taking the House of Commons for granted.

We made it very clear in this party during the initial debate that we prefer to see the passage of the bill in question at the time it was initially debated. It was very clear during the debate. It should be crystal clear that the funding that is currently in place and that has allowed the first contract to be called on the Hibernia project is being funded from the offshore development fund and is not financed or funded by the Government of Canada as a consequence of the passage of this bill. The reality is that if Bill C-44 does not pass the House and does not pass Parliament, the project will shut down when it runs out of interim financing which is coming from the offshore development fund.

What is noteworthy is that despite the support, both at the initial opportunity that we had to debate Bill C-44 in the House and later, the Liberal Party was supportive of the bill, we still see that the New Democratic Party, now joined by the Bloc Quebecois, is out to destroy the Hibernia project. That is an unusual and unholy alliance, but this is a matter of debate and not privilege.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: I listened with some concern to the statement made by the hon. member for Shefford. I have received some documents; perhaps there are more. This may or may not constitute a question of privilege. I have also heard the hon. parliamentary secretary's comments, as well as those of the hon. member for Humber—Sainte-Barbe—Baie Verte. I think it would be appropriate for the Chair to take the matter under advisement and come back to the House with a ruling.

There is no need to hear more arguments. I get the point, especially regarding the ruling the Chair made a few months ago.

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[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Speaker: I have a statement which it is necessary to make. I have received written notice from the hon. member for Essex—Windsor that he is unable to move his motion during Private Members' hour on Monday, October 1, 1990. It has not been possible to arrange an exchange of positions in order of precedents pursuant to