

rights, immunities and privileges of individual members of the House of Commons. When the two are in conflict, or apparent conflict, it should be the House and the members thereof who resolve the difference.

Traditionally the House has accommodated concerns about the text of its current and proposed Standing Orders through the process of debate, amendment and clarification through agreement. Furthermore, the House and all hon. members may seek to clarify, to modify and to interpret House rules and practices by recourse to points of order, questions of privilege and to the committee charged with the review of and report on the Standing Orders and procedures in the House and its committees.

So seriously does the House view its duty to review and to evaluate, to establish and revise its Standing Orders, that it has even designated by Standing Order 51 that they shall be automatically reviewed and debated at the beginning of the first session of every Parliament.

While the hon. member does not have a point of order, he will have several future opportunities to propose changes to the Standing Orders.

Again, I emphasize that the argument raised by the hon. member for Kamloops was obviously very carefully considered. The matters are important matters and I hope that he will be able to accept the basis of this ruling, which is that ultimately it is the House that must make up its mind as to the orders by which we are governed.

I thank the hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before resuming debate, I have a decision—

[*Translation*]

—to give you on the amendment or motion by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing.

Unfortunately, I must rule the hon. member's motion out of order, because Citation 437(1) of Beauchesne clearly states: "An amendment setting forth a proposition dealing with a matter which is foreign to the proposition involved in the main motion is not relevant and cannot be moved."

Government Orders

We resume debate with the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, in participating in the debate on my House Leader's amendment, I would begin by saying that basically, any privilege is based on a citation from Beauchesne which reads as follows:

[*English*]

I believe, from memory, the most fundamental privilege of the House is to establish rules of procedure for itself and to enforce them. I think that basic tenet is important to the debate today. I recognize the importance of the evolution of the rules and the procedures of this House; the written rules and the unwritten rules because we have unwritten rules, unwritten conventions. But I deplore the fact that this substantive proposal to change the rules of procedure of the House was not put to a committee of this House for study and consideration as it should have been by the government.

In 1985, the McGrath commission was asked by the House to look at in-depth change to the Standing Orders. A committee of the House worked hard and long, looked at the evidence and made some serious proposals which were, in large part, accepted by the House and adopted by us. I deplore that we did not go that route again and ask the House, through its committees, to give us the benefit of a serious scrutiny of the proposal put to us by the government.

The proposals are indeed serious and will probably cause some great difficulties for many of us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, since the first day of this 34th Parliament, April 3, 1989, which is already two years ago, the present Standing Orders have all in all served Canadians' interests well. Minor modifications might be useful, no doubt, substantial modifications, perhaps, after study and consideration, but not, to lessen the privileges, the legitimate right of members to participate in the Canadian democratic process of parliamentary debate—not at that cost. In the few minutes at my disposal, I intend to show you that these measures, this bill, if adopted, would gag members by reducing the time