

Motions

that the whole concept of instructions to a committee by the House would be meaningless unless such instructions could be proposed as a motion during the point in time in our Routine Proceedings for the consideration of motions.

I repeat, there is no meaning whatsoever that could be attributed to the right of this House to give instruction to a committee unless it could be done in a way which would lead to a decision being taken on the request for instruction. This can happen only if it is done during the time set out in Routine Proceedings for motions.

I also suggest that it is consistent with the spirit of parliamentary reform to which the Deputy Government House Leader has once again become converted, after his unfortunate lapse in connection with cancelling our rules respecting the calendar concept.

If he is serious in regard to what parliamentary reform is supposed to mean, giving greater authority to individual Members to do things in the House, surely individual Members not of the Privy Council must be permitted to move motions to give instructions to committees during that item under Routine Proceedings entitled Motions. I believe the Deputy Government House Leader is very much in error when he argues that this motion can be presented only as a matter of Private Members' Business.

My friend, the New Democratic Party House Leader, says that a motion to instruct the committee with respect to such things as travel is rare and last happened during the pipeline debate. I have to take some issue with him on that because at page 230 of Beauchesne, paragraph 6 of Citation 761 states:

Power to adjourn from place to place—Instructions have been given to committees to adjourn from place to place both within and outside Canada for the purposes of receiving evidence. Journals, October 21, 1976, p. 49.

There is a much more recent precedent on which to base our request that this motion be accepted and dealt with as quickly as possible. As recently as 1980, approximately, the special joint committee on the Constitution was authorized by this House and by the other place, I presume, to broadcast its proceedings after the committee was under way and without receiving any request from the committee that it be given such authority. That is a further precedent of this House giving instructions to a committee to do something it would not otherwise have the power to do. My hon. friend interjects to say that this motion to which I just referred was done on consent, but all consent means in this House is the equivalent of a unanimous decision of this House, but the consent does not always have to be given.

● (1130)

We are discussing whether this motion is in order, and I would like to say that rather than making the argument that this motion is somehow contrary to the spirit of parliamentary reform, if the Deputy Government House Leader and his colleagues have once again become converted to parliamentary reform, after their lapse with respect to suspending the

calendar in order to force the House to sit through the summer, they would welcome the initiative of the Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor (Mr. Langdon) and the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy), our critic on trade, who proposed motions to allow the committee to travel.

I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I believe this motion is in order not only insofar as it intends to give an instruction to a parliamentary committee, but with respect to it being called during Routine Proceedings under the heading of Motions, and also with respect to the substance of the matter.

I think something that is very consistent with the spirit of parliamentary reform is to make it easy for Canadians to have access to their parliamentary institutions. One of the best and most effective ways to do this is through enabling committees to travel when they are considering something as important as this trade deal so they can get the views of Canadians where they work, where they live, where they have their homes, and where they will be affected by measures such as this Government's trade deal with the United States.

It is not satisfactory to say that a committee has already travelled for this purpose. As has already been pointed out, the travel of a previous committee was clearly inadequate with only one day in each provincial capital. In any event, the committee in question did not study the matter that is currently before the legislative committee on Bill C-130. It did not study Bill C-130, nor the trade deal itself.

Mr. Speaker: I wish to hear all the submissions and certainly those of the Hon. Member for Windsor West. However, with respect, I think the Hon. Member is straying from the procedural point with which I am faced. I will certainly hear the Hon. Member for Windsor West in conclusion, but I would like to put a question to him. Assuming this particular motion is acceptable and receives the support of the House, can the Hon. Member for Windsor West assist the Chair as to whether that would mean that the committee would necessarily have to accept the power given to it and to in fact decide to travel? It seems to me, as the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap pointed out and very properly, that this is framed in terms of a permissive motion and even if it was passed here, it would not necessarily result in the committee deciding to travel.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, you quite rightly pointed out that in effect there are two kinds of instructions. There are mandatory instructions and permissive instructions. I would hope we could have an instruction from this House which is mandatory, which requires this committee to travel and hear Canadians where they live and work and where they will be affected by the Government's trade deal. If that is not the case, there is a motion on the Order Paper presented by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry which I would interpret as providing mandatory instructions.