

Point of Order

Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons moved, and I quote:

That seven members and two staffers from the Standing Committee on Transport be authorized to travel to Europe from October 30 to November 9, 1991 to complete a study on high speed trains.

The hon. member for Shefford opposed this motion, Mr. Speaker, and the government House leader simply answered, and I quote:

Madam Speaker, if the Bloc Quebecois chooses to prevent this committee from proceeding on that travel, then I have no choice but to accept that at this point.

Mr. Speaker, barely ten minutes later, while my colleague from Shefford and myself had gone out for a few moments, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, seconded by the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond, moved to give unanimous consent to this motion authorizing seven members of this House, that is four Conservatives, two Liberals and the mover, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan himself, to travel to Europe at the expense of the Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Shefford: Sixty thousand!

Mr. Rocheleau: Some \$60,000 will be spent, Mr. Speaker.

My question is this: we were against this motion and the government House leader accepted the Bloc Quebecois position. Just minutes later, in our absence, the motion was brought back and passed surreptitiously with the consent of the three parties. Mr. Speaker, is it normal procedure to bring back a motion during the same sitting when opposition to it has been expressed?

[*English*]

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I can somewhat sympathize with the concern of the member that the House had made one decision and because there was not unanimous consent, the same issue was raised later that day and there was unanimous consent given.

Now, the Bloc is not a party of the House. One of the things the legitimate parties in this House have always done to make sure that the government or any individual party does not run roughshod over the House is to make sure we have a roster of people who are in the House.

Therefore, we find it is an obligation in our caucus to make sure that we have members here at all times, so that if the government gets up and introduces a motion

that requires unanimous consent, which we do not agree to, we are indeed here doing our duty in the House and able to express our disagreement.

I believe that if any group in the House feels that they want to be involved in an ongoing basis, they should follow a similar practice.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think I need to hear the hon. member for Shefford, not that he would not put the position of he and his colleagues with great clarity.

[*Translation*]

I want to tell the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer that I appreciate his point. However, the hon. member for Churchill has described the situation quite clearly to the House. This is a matter which, of course, concerns all hon. members, because the House obviously has authority over the conduct of business in this House, and sometimes circumstances change.

[*English*]

There is no rule and there is no law that says that because the House has at one moment refused consent for something, it cannot change its mind and give consent.

An hon. member: Call an election, call an election.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: It is not up to me to call an election!

[*English*]

An hon. member: Carried.

Mr. Speaker: I understand the hon. member's frustration, but I have to say to all hon. members that the hon. member for Churchill has put the position very succinctly. It is necessary for somebody to be here all the time.

[*Translation*]

COMMENTS BY PRIME MINISTER—REPORT FOR RULING

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, some time ago, the Right Hon. Prime Minister used rather unparliamentary language in this House when he called our leader hypocritical and stupid. At that time, the Chair had taken those words under advisement in order to decide whether they were parliamentary or not. I would like to know if a decision has been made as to whether the words "hypocritical and stupid" are acceptable parliamentary language in this House. If a decision