

Mr. Speaker: The Speaker, of course, is not supposed to have any personal memory of events in this place. But I do, and it has been customary from time to time over many years for complaints to be laid before the Speaker with respect to whether or not it was appropriate for the government to make a statement in the House which, of course, if that is done under the rules enables both opposition critics to have equal time to respond.

It has been argued by members that sit on both sides of this House on different occasions that that is the more appropriate way to proceed. I must advise Hon. Members and the public who are listening that that is not a practice which is stipulated in any rules of this House. Of course, as the Chair always says, if the House wishes to change the rules then the Chair will certainly abide by them. There are no rules to that effect, as I say, and the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, in raising this point, raises a complaint.

The government has made a response which may or may not satisfy hon. members but it is not a point of privilege and it is not a contempt of the House. I would suggest that Hon. Members discuss with each other ways and means by which the practice of making statements in the House can be followed as often as possible.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

VIA RAIL

TABLING OF SUMMARIES OF CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGETS

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, summaries of the 1989-93 corporate plan for VIA Rail Canada Inc. and the 1989 capital and operating budgets.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106.8 I have the honour to table in both official languages the government's response to petitions nos. 342-0879 342-0881, inclusive.

[Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PARLIAMENTARIANS

TABLING OF SECOND REPORT OF CANADIAN SECTION

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, the second report on the activities of the Canadian Section of the International Association of French-speaking Parliamentarians.

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BILL C-20

TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, the report of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-20, an Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act.

[Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[English]

PETITIONS

VIA RAIL

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present to the House petitions that have been certified pursuant to Article 36 as being correct in terms of their form. These British Columbians are concerned about the government's proposals to slash VIA Rail. I suppose on a day when it has been slashed by 51 per cent the government would want to know that there are already thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are already opposed to what the government was proposing and are certainly proposed what it has done today.