

what its political complexion may be, that those private members' bills rarely come to a vote.

Let us not be mealy-mouthed about it. The position is that nine-tenths of the bills are embarrassing to the government. That invariably results in most bills being talked out. That is the parliamentary phrase for people saying one thing while really not wanting it to come to a vote.

I have no strong views one way or the other on the merits or demerits of the hon. member's bill because I have not looked at it that carefully. However, I do know this. Those bills have been proceeded with quite regularly on the basis of the draw. Once a member's bill is talked out, not having reached a vote in the private member's hour, it automatically goes to the bottom of the list. To all intents and purposes, that means it is dead for that session. We really have not whined, complained or belly-ached about that in the past. Most members realize that that is the rule of the game before getting into it. I have had a private member's bill on the list for two years. It has not been reached. It is so far down the list this year that I know darned well it will not be reached.

Quite frankly, it is an effrontery for another member who enters into that course of action, knowing the rules, traditions and practices, and because of some actions of members on his own side or perhaps members on all sides of the House the bill is talked out, for some extraordinary reason to think he is aggrieved and therefore wants another kick at the can. He wants that bill left at the top of the list so that next time it can come up again. That is basically the appeal that has been put to you. Let us not clothe it in parliamentary terms; let us put the stark, naked facts in front of the House. Somebody feels he has been aggrieved because his bill has been talked out.

● (1710)

If you take it upon yourself to change the system, Mr. Speaker, I suggest you are opening up a hornet's nest. I do not know on what grounds the Chair could change this rule; there may be something hidden in the depths of the green book which gives you that authority, but I doubt it. If the Chair does have such authority it has never been cited. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that if you do exercise it on this occasion there are likely to be 347 bills on the list of private members' bills in respect of which the same appeal will be made. In such a ridiculous situation, the government itself would be obliged to step in. I am not saying this in any partisan way. Usually, no matter which party is in power it is in that party's interest to see a private member's bill come to a vote. If Your Honour establishes a precedent simply on the basis of a private member's bill having been talked out, then every member is going to be appealing to you and demanding that his bill come to a vote. My suggestion is that this would prove more embarrassing to the government than it would ever be to any opposition.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I commence with the well known words that "I had no intention of taking part in this debate". That happens to be true. I see an argument on both sides. I suspect that the argument which yields most strongly against the hon. member

for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) is that it has been done before the way it has been done this time. But the remarks just made by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) did prompt me to get to my feet. He tries to argue that if Your Honour allows this bill to be at the top of the list the same arguments will be raised with regard to 200 or 300 other bills on the order paper. I would remind the hon. member that this bill has already been given second reading. It went to committee, got committee approval and came back at the report stage for third reading.

It is certainly true that if the Speaker allows this bill to stay at the top of the list, then any other bill which gets committee approval and comes back here would be entitled to the same treatment. But it does not follow that all the bills which were talked out on second reading would have a case for being put at the top of the list.

**Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North):** Mr. Speaker, regardless of the stage which the bill has reached in the parliamentary process, it is still a most discriminatory proposition that it be given preferred treatment to the detriment of every other bill introduced. I do not understand how the hon. member can feel he has the right to make such an appeal against a practice which has been followed, without exception to the best of my knowledge, during the 22 years which I have sat in this House. Nor do I understand why the House is using 15 minutes of the private members' hour to discuss a procedural matter of this kind. I do not believe it ought to be before the House regardless whether the bill in question has progressed to third reading stage. The whole proposition is contrary to the practice and precedents of the House and it is an affront to every other member here that we should even be discussing it.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, the last hon. member who gave his point of view indicated that no precedent or procedure could justify the request made by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert). But to date there is no precedent either of an hon. member's private bill at the third reading stage which has been ignored in favour of other bills at the second reading stage.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) on the same point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Towers:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said no precedents had been given. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary was absent from the chamber when I spoke but I did cite a precedent—Bill C-208 presented by the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan). That is the point I made. He is changing the precedent which was set in the case of that bill, and I should like the hon. member to recognize that point.