

Point of Order—Mr. Nielsen

think I am close enough to you that I can hear, usually. Actually, it is the first time in my ten years' experience in the House of Commons that I have not heard the vote.

There is one point which should be made, that is, who was contributing to the noise at the time so that it could not be heard? Madam Speaker, you should not be criticized, nor should the people at the Table. Another point which cannot be overlooked is that when our House Leader was standing and tried two or three times to get your attention and the attention of the House of Commons, you were prepared to give your attention to that. You tried, you did everything in your power, but the Members of the Government would not allow you; they shouted you down. Let it be recorded that it was Government Members. Why would we shout down our own House Leader when he was trying to get the attention of the House of Commons?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Towers: I do not know whether Hon. Members opposite were supported by the New Democratic Party—they care less for democracy anyway; we have seen it happen before—but it certainly was not us on this side who did not want our House Leader heard. It was Hon. Members opposite. They would not allow you, Madam Speaker, to adjudicate the proceedings in the House of Commons, as usually happens. This has to be recorded fairly and squarely.

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, I had hoped that you would soon conclude that you have heard enough on this point to rule because what is going on here today is quite disgusting. We are talking about the reputation of a very devoted servant of the Table. It is fine to have tricks up their sleeves to try to prevent the House from dealing with the business with which it should be dealing; that is one thing. But they should not drag into disrepute the ability of a very devoted servant of the Table to carry out his functions. They all know that he announced the vote, and I think they should drop this and quit these gutter tactics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, Members of the Official Opposition admitted very clearly today that they have a hearing problem. I would like to ask through you, Madam Speaker, whether they have learned to read, because in *Hansard* the yeas and nays are recorded.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members have had a chance to express their views on the last two points of orders raised by the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I listened very carefully to his presentation and to that of other Members. I had the feeling last night that I carried out the procedure as it should have been done. It happens very often that we see the clock at a certain time and we do not see it when it strikes exactly ten o'clock. I know that I acted according to that practice.

As for giving the floor to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), I felt—and I think Members will feel the same way—that I was carrying out an order of the House; we had just voted on that particular motion. There are other considerations. There was another point of order raised about Hon. Members not hearing the Clerk calling out the count of the vote. I will look at that too, to see whether there is any irregularity in that particular instance.

But I think it happens very, very often in the House that Members do not hear the count because often when the count is given there is considerable noise in the House. It seems to me that it is probably sufficient for the Speaker to announce whether the motion has been defeated or adopted, and I certainly did that last night.

I will take the Hon. Member's points of orders under advisement because I want to look at all his arguments and review all the procedure to ascertain whether all procedures have been followed according to our rules.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-666, an Act to amend the Official Languages Act.

Some Hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. McKenzie: Madam Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to extend in legislation the spirit of paragraph 7 of the House of Commons resolution of June 6, 1973 on official languages by ensuring that a public servant or employee of a Crown corporation, hired prior to the day of the coming into force of the Official Languages Act and still employed without being rehired since that day, is able to continue to occupy his position or compete for any other position without his ability to perform in his second official language being taken into consideration as a criterion of merit.

Also this Bill would restore the merit system in the Public Service, Armed Forces, RCMP and the 480 Crown corporations. It would stop the dead-ending of qualified public servants in their positions because of their lack of aptitude to learn the French language. It would run counter to the Bill of the Secretary of State (Mr. Joyal), Bill C-398, which is intended to force bilingualism on the private sector by the imposition of fines and jail sentences for non-compliance.

Clause 2 would prevent the Government from forcing compliance of the Official Languages Act on the private sector without first seeking enabling legislation to that effect by way of a full parliamentary debate in the House of Commons,