

*Extension of Sittings*

Has the Government other threats or forces in store for us besides the free trade Bill? I ask what else the Government has in its little Christmas bag. Will it make us happy and give us some legislation other than Bill C-2? The Minister says, "Watch me, trust me". Well, I do not mind watching him, but I do not trust him very much.

Paragraph five of the motion suspends Standing Orders 73(1) and 73(2) respecting committee stage of Public Bills, not just the free trade Bill but all Public Bills. We had a Ways and Means Motion before the House a couple of days ago, dealing with the free trade Bill, and if this order is still in effect some weeks hence, there may also be some Private Members' Business before the House. However, the motion suspends Standings Orders 73(1) and 73(2). It is another example of some pretty sloppy drafting.

If, in two weeks hence, there is a Private Member's Bill before the House during private Members' hour, we all know that it should go to a legislative committee, but because of this order of the Government, it will not be able to. It would go to a Committee of the Whole House. That does not make any sense. We abolished that 20 years ago.

Paragraph six states that after the House returns from the Senate following the first Royal Assent of this Session, a Minister of the Crown may, and I emphasize may, propose to rescind this order. The motion reads "may", not "shall". As pointed out yesterday in debate, if a Minister does propose this, it is a motion that is debatable, amendable and votable. How do we know how those people on the Government side will vote? When they come back from their little holidays, they may want to stay here for the whole of January because it is too cold outside. They may want to stay here until February, who knows. However, nothing in the motion provides that a Minister shall rescind the order. It provides that he may. It is not very difficult to understand. It is permissive.

If the Government chooses not to have Royal Assent until some time in June or next summer or next fall, nothing will happen. The Minister would not be able to move to rescind the order, even if he thought he should move to rescind it, because we would not have had a Royal Assent.

We do not do Royal Assent for every Bill we pass in the House. We do not want to disturb the Senate too often, so we gather a few Bills together and take a little walk down there for Royal Assent when there are several Bills requiring Royal Assent. How do we know when Royal Assent will be held? No one knows that.

This motion is so poorly drafted—

**Mr. Nunziata:** So what?

**Mr. Gauthier:** So poorly drafted.

**Mr. Nunziata:** I thought you called it pornographic.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Oh, no, it could be that too, but I will let you speak to that. I will stick with the facts.

I was saying that the motion is so poorly drafted that it is not possible for members of the Opposition to know what the Government intends, in what manner it intends to proceed, in what manner it would like Hon. Members of the House to proceed. It is not clear.

It being Christmas in a few days, we must presume that the motion is simply the latest example of the Government's inability to manage its business in the House. The latest example of incompetence and sloppiness was shown yesterday when government Members tried to move closure while they did not have the authority to do so. It is not for us to tell them what to do, but we would hope that some day they would get their act together and do things as they should be done.

Today is Thursday, December 15, at least three days into the session, and we are discussing a motion that would impose the will of the majority on the minority, that would settle a dispute between 160 elected government Members and some 130-odd elected Members on this side of the House who feel that—

**An Hon. Member:** That is a stretch.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Well, 82 plus 43 is 125. I said 130, but we may win a couple of these judicial reviews that are being held. One never knows, our numbers may go up by a few.

I believe it would be less than charitable—

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hereby give notice that at the next sitting of the House, immediately before the Order of the Day is called for resuming debate on the motion that is government business No. 1 on the Order Paper and on any amendments proposed thereto, I will move that the debate shall not be further adjourned.