

Routine Proceedings

● (1505)

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Leonid Kravchuk, member of Parliament and former President of Ukraine.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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PRIVILEGE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising out of the leaking to the media of the report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development on changes to social programs.

I submit that the privileges of members of this House have been breached by the premature release to the media of this report due to be tabled today. It is a question of privilege because it is a violation of the proper order of proceedings that reports from committees should be presented first in the House of Commons so as to ensure equal opportunity to access by all members of Parliament and all Canadians. Until such presentation in this House, reports should be confidential.

To accentuate the breach that has taken place, as an associate member of the committee I was denied access to the report while it was freely available to the press.

I would ask that you consider what appropriate action might be taken to deal with what is surely a gross contempt of the rules and procedures of this House.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the question of privilege. Of course I will look into it and report to this House if necessary.

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POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-226

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 13 a vote was taken on Bill C-226. Although I stood to be recorded as voting for the bill, I was inadvertently omitted from the list. May I have the record corrected?

The Speaker: My hon. colleague, it would be difficult to go back and change a vote that has already occurred. It would set a precedent that would be very difficult for us to manage in the House.

I am sure the hon. member will have his views put on the record. They stand there now. This is not really a point of order but his point has been made.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr.

Speaker, the hon. member was present in the House and he voted on a measure.

Through inadvertence his vote was not recorded. It was not his inadvertence, it was the inadvertence of the Table. It seems to me that the only appropriate way of dealing with this matter perhaps by unanimous consent is to record the hon. member as voting in favour of the bill that was before this House.

The Speaker: I would take the suggestion of the hon. member for York South—Weston. Notwithstanding the fact that it is rather a different approach, if there were unanimous consent by the House I would agree to letting the vote be recorded.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before giving unanimous consent, are we to understand that this would create a precedent and that it will now be possible to ask for a vote to be reviewed after three, four or five days or even a week?

The Speaker: Dear colleague, with unanimous consent in the House, we can change just about anything we want. I hope this will not become an everyday occurrence. That is why I asked for unanimous consent. If there is unanimous consent, the vote can be changed; if not, it will stay the same.

● (1510)

[English]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Perhaps the Speaker would allow the whips from all three parties to confer on this issue and we will come back to the House tomorrow with our recommendation and that would perhaps save the time of the House and solve the problem more rapidly.

The Speaker: If the three whips would get together we will come back to the point tomorrow.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 215 petitions.