

Motions for Papers

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Of the questions that were answered today, No. 37 was placed on the Order Paper on October 23, 1969. If the government would answer these questions promptly or at least within a few weeks of their being put on the Order Paper, we would not be in the position of having to stand motions because the government is not able to give us any satisfactory answer or gives some spurious answer as to why they cannot give us the information.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if hon. members want to pursue the matter.

Some hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The point of order before the House now is that we are perhaps taking too much time on this order of business. If we pursue the matter on a point of order for another ten minutes, that ten minutes could have been used to clear up this order of business. At the same time, if hon. members consider the matter important they should be allowed to make their contribution in the next few minutes.

Mr. Fairweather: Mr. Speaker, if I could get unanimous consent I would move under Standing Order 43 that the Committee on Procedure and Organization be asked to study a more expeditious and less boring way of dealing with notices of motion for the production of papers.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, if I could get unanimous consent that the hon. gentleman's motion would be passed by unanimous consent so that we do not have to use time debating it, I would agree.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I have sat idly by observing what I think are quite irresponsible actions on the part of the government. These motions are not debatable. We find we have smuggled into every one of them a statement apologizing for or explaining why the information is not available. The government has no right to do that at all. They have one of two procedures available: they can accept, or if they do not want to accept they can transfer for debate. There can be no explanation given; the explanation is due on the debate. In every one of these cases where the government makes an explanation there has been a definite breach of the rules, and I think this is the trouble we are facing.

Hon. members on the government side who are answering in this way have no business to do so at this stage. They can do this by

correspondence or by telephone calls. But there must not be these spurious debates that have been smuggled in on both sides.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, we have listened patiently to the arguments of all parties. I believe we should get information when we ask questions or put notices of motions on the order paper. The Cr ditistes certainly have not taken too much of the time of the House with notices of motions on the order paper.

I see that notice of motion No. 63 in the name of the hon. member for Lotbini re (Mr. Fortin) has been on the order paper since November 25, 1969 and that nothing has been done about it. The Ralliement cr ditiste can certainly not be accused of wasting the time of the House in this field.

I will conclude by saying that whatever the number of notices of motions put on the order paper they all seem to get the same treatment.

[*English*]

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, there are two or three points that I should like to make, especially after the matter that has been raised by the newly attached Liberal member from Halifax.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege—

Mr. Howard (Skeena): There is no fishing expedition—

Mr. McCleave: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member kindly resume his seat. I believe the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants is now seeking the floor on a question of privilege. He should be allowed to state his question at this time.

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind what is poured on me by the hon. member for Skeena but I would not like it poured on my leader. I am the member for Halifax-East Hants. The hon. member may make any remark he wishes to make about me.