

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

And so on. First of all, I want to deal with the particular motion put forward by the Deputy Government House Leader. Your Honour will remember that not long ago under Standing Order 115 the House used 115 when we were dealing with Bill C-72, the official languages Bill, because at that time there was agreement between the representatives of all Parties involved. At the moment, of course, that would be representatives from each of the three federal political Parties.

When the Deputy Government House Leader indicates that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 115 or 116, I simply want to submit that half of that is correct; that under Standing Order 115, no, there was not unanimous agreement among the representatives of the three Parties, but such is not the case under Standing Order 116. Standing Order 116 says:

"116. When a Minister of the Crown, from his or her place in the House, states that a majority of the representatives of the several parties have come to an agreement in respect of a proposed allotment of days or hours for the proceedings at any stage of the passing of a public bill,"

And so on and so forth. Such is not the case. As my hon. colleague, the House Leader for the Official Opposition, has indicated there was an agreement. I understand that there is some question about the appropriateness of the agreement in terms of the necessity for this length of time, but I want to indicate that the Deputy Government House Leader thought it was appropriate to read into the record yesterday so it was perfectly clear that there was an agreement between two of the three representatives of the Parties represented in the House of Commons.

It says, simply, "we wish to inform you that our respective parties are prepared to agree on an allocation of a further" number of days.

There was an agreement between two of the three representatives of the political Parties of Canada, that we were prepared to agree on an allotment of time at both report stage and at third reading stage.

I also wish to submit that under Standing Order 117 there is obviously an obligation for the Minister introducing that motion to point out the appropriate time that would be allocated at each stage. I want to submit that, as I read *Hansard*, that certainly was not the case yesterday. It would make, if we like, another reason for considering this initiative by the Deputy Government House Leader to be out of order at this time.

**An Hon. Member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** I want to thank both the Hon. Member for Windsor West and the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap. I will now hear the Hon. Minister of State.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be brief, just to review the history of this matter. There have been several delays in getting to report stage and third reading of Bill C-130 which have been outlined to the House on previous occasions, so I will not repeat them. I made a serious effort yesterday to negotiate time with the representatives of the opposition Parties, or the coalition Party, and the House will know—and I will not repeat it because I read it into the record—that the coalition has been formed to review this

matter. Normally I would table this letter, but there are some things that one comes upon in one's parliamentary career that one wishes to hold. For that reason I would prefer to keep the original copy of this letter, myself, for my personal records, and it may perhaps be of interest. I can provide copies to anybody who wants one.

• (1210)

Here we have a coalition of the opposition Parties, a coalition Party, suggesting that the House take 150 days at report stage and 200 days at third reading stage to consider Bill C-130. I will speak to the substance of that at an appropriate time.

Today I want to deal with two things. First, I want to deal with the argument of my hon. friend that the notice must specify the number of days that will be spelled out for report stage and third reading. I would refer my hon. friend to page 287 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition which sets out the appropriate wording for a notice of motion for time allocation under Standing Order 75C as it then was. It reads as follows:

"That an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing 75A or 75B with respect to an allocation of time to the (*stage of Bill*) of Bill C- . . . . ., An Act . . . . ., and, under the provisions of Standing Order 75C, I give notice of my intention to move a time allocation motion at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at that stage of the Bill."

I submit it is very clear that the form spelled out in Beauchesne's does not require that the number of days or hours be stated. It is simply the notice and that notice has been met by reading right from Beauchesne's, substituting the appropriate Bill number and title. I submit that the allegation of my colleagues opposite that the notice must contain the specified number of days or hours is incorrect. We have complied with that part of the requirements.

Second, I would review very briefly to the second argument made which is an interesting argument, but I do not think it has any substance whatsoever. My hon. colleagues are claiming that they have met the provisions of Standing Order 116 by having, as it states in the letter, a majority of the Parties agreed. Yesterday, when my hon. colleague made this point, you very appropriately made it clear that the wording is a majority of the representatives of the several Parties.

I would submit that in arguing this point my colleague has continually referred to a majority of the Parties. That is not a majority of the representatives of the Parties. It is an interesting argument but I do not think it has any substance whatsoever if it is to be read correctly.

I submit that we have met the provisions of Standing Order 117 and that we are in a position to move an order for time allocation, the motion which I have in fact moved. I do not think we need to prolong this argument any further. I think the points have been made. If in fact Your Honour wishes to reserve judgment on this and spend some time reviewing it, the Government is perfectly content with that and would simply call Bill C-130 and enable the debate to continue on the amendments that are before the House.