

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

this House now for almost 20 years, as you are aware, but not as long as the House Leader of the Liberal Party and a bit longer than the Hon. Member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre). I feel that I cannot, with a Bill of this sort which amends 27 statutes of the Crown, do my job as a Member of Parliament. I cannot, in a 20-minute speech, cover all its facets which I submit that you should take into consideration, Sir. It is impossible in 20 minutes to cover energy, subsidies, agriculture, fisheries, services, banking, the dispute settlement mechanism, and all things of that sort.

There are many precedents. The famous one was the energy debate in 1982. Our Conservative friends across the way made a big issue out of an energy Bill that amended some 15 statutes. They argued very strongly, through the ringing of the bells over several days, that the Bill be split because it dealt with different independent propositions at the same time under one umbrella or omnibus Bill.

I want to make four points other than the one I have already made. This morning, the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) dealt with Mr. Speaker McNaughton's proposition. Going back a number of years in the House, Speaker McNaughton, when faced with a single resolution which contained two distinct propositions, ruled in favour of upholding the ancient and undoubted rights of Members of Parliament. He stated:

I must come to the conclusion that the motion before the House contains two propositions and since strong objections have been made to the effect that these two propositions should be considered together it is my duty to divide them.

In response, the Minister of State said that this was a resolution with which Mr. Speaker McNaughton dealt. It was not a piece of legislation. It was not a Bill but a resolution. I want to argue for a few moments this afternoon that the principle is the same. It is a very important principle, whether it applies to a Bill or to a resolution. A good precedent was set here by Speaker McNaughton a number of years ago. Whether in a Bill or in a resolution, if there are two distinct propositions, Speaker McNaughton said, "—that these two propositions should be considered together it is my duty to divide them".

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill before us today is one that deals with several distinct propositions. I think it is incumbent upon the Speaker to consider very seriously dividing the legislation before us. Whether it is a Bill or a resolution, the principle is still the same in dealing with parliamentary business facing the people of this great country of ours.

Earlier today the Minister of State (Mr. Lewis) in response to the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, responded to a ruling which I believe was made by Mr. Speaker Jerome in 1977. He said at that time that when you are at report stage of a Bill you can move an amendment to delete a specific part of a Bill or a specific part of report stage. Therefore, if you are dealing with a smorgasbord or an umbrella type of Bill, an amendment can be moved deleting part A, B, C or D. Speaker Jerome said at that time that that was certainly possible, but

that when you are dealing with second reading of a Bill you are debating a Bill in principle. Therefore it is not possible, in the rules of the House of Commons, to divide a Bill at second reading stage because we are at that time debating the principles of the Bill. Those principles are very important, and it is not possible whatever to deal with a Bill through amendments.

The Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap mentioned a procedural debate a number of years ago that dealt with Bill C-207. I forget the year. Perhaps the Hon. Member can remind me of it, but Bill C-207 dealt with 18 or 19 different statutes. The then Member for Winnipeg North Centre was also involved. At that time the Speaker of the day recommended splitting the Bill. Since this Bill, Bill C-130, does not deal with 18 or 19 different statutes but with 27 different statutes, the same rule should apply.

Lastly, not only do we have this particular Bill before the House today to amend some 27 different statutes in the land, but very recently we have had the tabling of a motion on abortion. In that case, the abortion motion will suspend the rules of the House of Commons. In one case, on abortion, the rules will be suspended and in the second case, Bill C-130, a smorgasbord of legislation will amend 27 different statutes. I suggest that these two things taken together set a precedent that disregards the ancient customs, rules and traditions of the House of Commons.

● (1530)

I do know that if one of our Saskatchewan predecessors were here today, the former Hon. Member for Prince Albert, the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, he would be extremely concerned about running roughshod over the rules and traditions of the House of Commons. When I first came here, Mr. Diefenbaker sat to the left of the Speaker, very close to where one of the Acting Speakers from Edmonton is now sitting today. Mr. Diefenbaker rose in the House of Commons many times to remind Members of Parliament about the traditions of this place and of the mother of Parliaments in Great Britain and about how important it was that we not suspend, run roughshod or ignore those rules just because a great majority might sit on one side of the House.

Of course, in those days, there was a Liberal majority with Pierre Trudeau as the Prime Minister between 1968 and 1972. Mr. Trudeau was re-elected in 1974 to 1979 with another majority. I can recall that during both those Parliaments, Mr. Diefenbaker on a number of occasions reminded us of the importance of respecting minorities in Parliament and respecting the rules and traditions of Parliament. I argue, with respect, that neither this Bill which amends some 27 statutes nor the abortion resolution which suspends the rules of the House respects the rules and traditions of the House of Commons.

I do not want to say anything that was said earlier this morning by the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap. It