

Oil Pollution

Mr. Nowlan: I appreciate Your Honour's ruling to a point. This is a new Standing Order in this Parliament, and, while I have not got the Standing Order before me, I understand the wording to be "disposed of the matter". Surely when this House refuses to give unanimous consent to a similar motion two or three days or two or three weeks before, that is a form of disposition of the matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This Standing Order is 100 years old. It is not a new Standing Order.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the House accept the proposal of Your Honour, namely, that the debate on this motion stand until representatives of the four parties have met and arranged a time when it might be debated. We might find some time later this evening or tomorrow. The House has agreed that the motion be put. The House would like to debate it. Surely we can come to an agreement when that might be done.

If necessary, I would be prepared to move that the debate be adjourned. The difficulty with that is the motion would then be put under government orders. I do not want to do that unless we have an assurance from the government House leader that the order will be called. I think the most useful thing to do at this moment is for the House to agree to let the motion stand until the House leaders have met and discussed a time when it might be debated.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, the importance of the matter is obvious, and we support the proposal you have made.

As we are the hon. members who are mainly concerned today, this being an allotted day for the study of supplies for the period ending June 30, 1972, and as a motion has already been put on the order paper under the name of the hon. member for Kamouraska (Mr. Dionne), it seems to me that we cannot now start a debate on another subject. Taking the previous agreement into consideration, and unless the various parties now agree to hold an important debate at a time that is agreeable to all four parties, it seems to me priority should be given to the day allotted the opposition and that the debate held until now has unfortunately trespassed on the time that should be devoted to the important question brought up today.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The point again taken by the hon. member for Lotbinière makes sense to the Chair. Obviously we might get into a difficult situation if we do not by agreement give priority to the debate which has been set aside under a supply motion. That is why I took the opportunity to suggest this originally. I hope that some agreement can be reached between the House leaders as to when this debate might be held. Perhaps we might hear from the government House leader on this point.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I agree 100 per cent with the suggestion that the normal supply day ought to go ahead. It would be unfortunate to deprive the Social Credit party of their day in the House. I also agree that we ought to meet and in the meantime stand the motion until

[Mr. Speaker.]

agreement is reached as to when it can be called. Perhaps we will have a discussion as to whether it will take place on a government day or an opposition day. I hope we can work that out.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, we are not here to play games. The government has agreed to the motion being put. The government acknowledges that it would not be fair to the Social Credit party to debate it today. The government has set aside tomorrow for a New Democratic Party supply motion. I do not think any of us ought to interfere with that day either. Since the government has agreed to the motion being put, the government House leader should very readily agree that the motion be debated on the next day for government business.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There does not appear to be agreement as to what ought to be done. I suggest that the Chair has no alternative but to recognize the hon. member for Fraser Valley East. In the meantime, perhaps there might be consultations at the highest level to see whether we should adjourn this debate so that later this afternoon we might proceed with the consideration of the motion which stands in the name of the hon. member for Kamouraska.

Mr. Jerry Pringle (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say at the outset that because of the urgency of the matter I felt that this motion should be made today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: I concur with those in the House who have stated that we should endeavour to let the day's business go forward and not interfere with the motion of the Social Credit party. I assure Your Honour that I am fully prepared at this time to discuss my reasons for moving this motion. As the mover of the motion, I am prepared to lead off the debate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: I am also prepared to accept a ruling that this matter be dealt with at a later date because I do not want to interfere in any way with the motion set down for debate on this opposition day. Therefore I will be brief.

• (1450)

I might say for the benefit of hon. members who are smirking behind me that my home is about three miles from this particular spill.

Mr. Bell: Where were you on Monday?

Mr. Pringle: In answer to the hon. gentleman, I should like to say that on Monday I landed by aeroplane at Abbotsford, British Columbia, and went fully into this problem. I should also like to point out that a senior cabinet minister from British Columbia accompanied me. We not only investigated the problem caused by this oil spill but also investigated the flood situation in British Columbia, something I have heard nothing about from the other side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!