

The Address—Mr. Allmand

We appreciate the need for emergency debates. They have a place. That was shown on Tuesday night. They have to be presented in accordance with the rules, otherwise we get into argument and it is a one-sided argument. I have no problem with a two-sided argument but I have a lot of difficulty with that kind of rhetoric being a called a statement as referred to in the rules.

Mr. Speaker: First, I thank the Hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) for his intervention. I think there is some justice in his observations. In the interest of all Members I will come back later on this afternoon and perhaps clarify and in a modest way give some guidance to all of us.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I want to make one short comment. If you read Standing Order 52 (4), and I will read it:

The Speaker shall decide, without any debate, whether or not the matter is proper to be discussed.

It is up to the Speaker.

Mr. Merrithew: Nobody is arguing without.

Mr. Gauthier: No reasons are required. No explanations are required. I hope the Government is not arguing that the Speaker should now explain how he comes to his decisions, because that would be completely wrong.

Mr. Lewis: No, we are not doing that.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the House and I know the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) wishes to get on with debate, but let me say this: I did not take the intervention of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) as argument meeting the matters that were put forward by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg Transcona (Mr. Blaikie). The Minister of Justice is saying that there are rules by which an application for an emergency debate is to be made. I think what the Minister of Justice is saying—and as the Speaker of the House I must listen to him—is that he has some concern that perhaps we have strayed away from the rule a little bit. I will take that under consideration. I think it is a legitimate comment and I will come back to try to assist the House.

The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) is absolutely right that there is not to be argument. The Speaker must make the decision and, of course, as Hon. Members know as a consequence of the deliberations of the reform committee, the Speaker has been urged not to give reasons.

I welcome the interventions that are made and I will come back to the House on the subject later today.

• (1230)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Wednesday, April 5, consideration of the motion of Mr. Richardson for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment of Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra) (p. 131) and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Broadbent (p. 140).

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Prime Minister who just spoke, we ordinary Members have only 20 minutes to speak in this important debate. Consequently, we are restricted to a few key subjects.

The Prime Minister referred to certain remarks I made and to certain questions I had put in December with respect to the language question, and I wish to deal with that first.

I put my question to the Prime Minister on Monday, December 19, the day after Premier Bourassa had held a press conference during which he announced his intentions with respect to language legislation. It is true that in answer to my question the Prime Minister said that he had called Premier Bourassa on Sunday and that he had expressed the view that the use of the notwithstanding clause was not correct, and that he thought that what was proposed by the Government of Quebec was an inappropriate response to the Supreme Court judgment.

Commenting on his response, I thought the principles enunciated in his response were fine. However, a few days later the Secretary of State, the Hon. Member for Lac-Saint-Jean (Mr. Bouchard), the Minister responsible for the official language minorities in this country, made exactly the opposite statement, and he was not even present in the House while this issue was under discussion. He stayed away.

In this instance we had an important Minister on a cabinet matter, on a Government matter, expressing a view quite different from that of the Prime Minister. The Secretary of State said that he supported the use of the