

*Points of Order**[English]*

Reading from page two of volume one it says: "Volume two contains dissenting opinions, appendices, minutes of proceedings". In other words, Mr. Speaker, when you read the first volume there is reference to the second volume, both of them being part of one report as the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier has described.

On behalf of my colleagues I have offered, and I wish to state this to Mr. Speaker, that in the event there is a reprint or printing of additional copies should members require additional copies for the House, the committee, or indeed for anyone for distribution purposes, I would not object to having both reports joined in one volume, if that is manageable for those who print these kinds of documents.

I would not of course advocate that we destroy the copies that have been printed. As I said previously, nothing wrong was intended and nothing wrong was committed. Therefore there would be no reason to redo the present copies. However, if it would please members across the way I would certainly have no objection should further printings of the report be necessary to join both volumes together.

[Translation]

Some say it may be too late. No, it is not too late, although there is nothing wrong with the reports we have here. All I want to say to hon. members opposite is, that if it makes them feel better, if that would satisfy them, we are prepared to co-operate in the event additional copies are needed. It is not too late. There was no malicious intent, and there was no harm done.

Actually, if I am not mistaken, according to informal discussions held yesterday, two of the three parties in this House agreed to keep the report as is.

[English]

Finally, in the unlikely event there would still be someone who mistakenly believed these two volumes constituted two reports, the committee chair went out of his way over the weekend to have a special jacket printed. Both volumes are contained inside the one jacket so that no one could possibly even inadvertently consider these two volumes as being two reports.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, speaking to this point of order I concur with my colleague from the Bloc that this report was not handled or distributed properly.

There are two volumes but there is nothing on the outside of either of the volumes to indicate which is number one and which is number two. You have to look into the contents to find that there is a second volume. Even at that you would have a difficult time knowing whether it was volume one or volume two.

Being concerned about the cost of a complete reprinting of this I would suggest that those copies that have not yet been distributed should be clearly labelled with a stamp or a sticker indicating volume one and that volume two is available with the dissenting reports in it.

It is important to make it very clear to all readers of the report who happen to get volume one that there were two dissenting reports, one by the Bloc Quebecois and one by the Reform Party. If it is not handled properly, the Canadian public and those who receive volume one may never know other options were put on the table.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. Perhaps I may provide some additional clarification. It is clear that the procedure was somewhat less than satisfactory. Considering the size of the report, the committee could have put everything together in a document of about 400 pages, which is common practice, or it could have published a complete report in French and complete English version. That would have been fair to everyone.

It seems to me that the reasons invoked by the government party were entirely unacceptable and the government also failed to prove that the Standing Orders had been observed in this case.

● (1520)

I was able to demonstrate, however, that the Standing Orders had been totally ignored, that the report did not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders and that, if the chairman of the committee had wanted to show he was acting in good faith, he could have called a meeting of his committee and put to a vote the requisite proposals for proceeding the way he did.

Consequently, I would ask you to hand down a ruling on the matter as requested earlier.

[English]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the remarks made by the chief government whip and by the member for Ottawa—Vanier ought to be more than sufficient to put this matter to rest.

They indicate very clearly that while there may be a complaint there is not any basis for a point of order or indeed a question of privilege arising out of the publication of a report in two volumes. I think it is commonplace that reports are published in more than one volume. Here we have a report that with the appendices comes to five volumes as I count them. That is what is available from distribution if members ask.

There is one further technical point I invite Your Honour to consider in reviewing this matter. Standing Order 108(1) which permits dissenting opinions and which was a change in the standing orders made during the last Parliament largely at the behest of members of this party applies only to standing committees.