

The honourable Member suggested that this should be the Chair's centennial project, which is perhaps a good idea, but I would suggest that this should be the centennial project of the House of Commons. Honourable Members know that the Chair under similar circumstances is bound by precedents. Conveniently it has been brought to the attention of the Chair that in recent years there have been a number of instances on which a division has been held where not one objecting voice was heard. There was one on Thursday, July 24, 1958; one on Monday, September 14, 1958; one on March 4, 1959; one on June 4, 1959; one on June 9, 1959; one on March 7, 1960 and one on August 1, 1960. I could go on enumerating them to honourable Members. If there ever was a Speaker who wanted to change the practice which has existed in the House of Commons for 100 years it is not this Speaker. I can only inform honourable Members that the suggestion made by the honourable Member for Queens is an interesting and practical one. It may be that the time of the House should not be taken up by the calling of divisions when it is known in advance what the result will be, but certainly it is not for the Chair to make such a decision, and certainly it is not for the Chair to interpret Standing Order No. 9 in any other way than it has been interpreted over the years.

Suggestions have been made during the last week that a committee should be set up to study changes to rules of the House of Commons. I suggest to honourable Members who may be members of that committee that this is one rule which should be given consideration with a view to eliminating the possibility of votes being held when the results are known in advance. Such a situation took place this evening. I thank the honourable Member for Queens for his suggestion which I know will be taken under consideration by honourable Members of this House who will be named as members of that committee to study possible changes.

In view of 100 years of practice I do not think I should change these rules at midnight today or tomorrow, therefore I must rule against the honourable Member for Queens.

And later.

I should bring to the attention of honourable Members who are still here after midnight that earlier in the course of the evening, a point of order which I considered was very interesting and important was raised by the honourable Member for Queens (Mr. MacLean), at which time certain precedents were brought to the attention of the Chair. Since then additional research has been made on behalf of the Chair and, to the list of precedents which I at that time mentioned I should add the following dates: November 12, 1963, November 18, 1964, and October 11, 1963. I do not suggest this is a complete record of the precedents, because as I indicated at the time the precedents go back to 1867, which perhaps may indicate a more objective picture of the situation.

Bill C-253, An Act to amend the Exports Credits Insurance Act, was read the second time, considered in Committee of the Whole and reported without amendment.

By unanimous consent, the said bill was read the third time and passed.

MIDNIGHT

The Order being read for the second reading of Bill C-252, An Act to provide general incentives to industry for the expansion of scientific research and development in Canada and to effect certain related amendments to the Income Tax Act;