

part in the ensuing debate on the point of order and it was agreed that a ruling would be handed down later on, so that the Chair could have a chance to study the contested point.

The French text of the preamble has this sentence: "Et considérant que le Parlement du Canada souhaite, en outre, que des programmes d'ensemble soient entrepris par le gouvernement du Canada agissant seul ou en collaboration avec les gouvernements provinciaux..."

On the other hand, the English text reads: "And whereas the Parliament of Canada is desirous that, in addition, comprehensive programs be undertaken by the Government of Canada, and by the Government of Canada in cooperation with provincial governments—"

It would appear that there is a difference between the two texts in that the French version uses the disjunctive form while the English text uses the conjunctive "and". It should be pointed out that the English text would not make sense unless the conjunction "and" were interpreted as being both conjunctive and disjunctive, so that in substance there may not be any real difference between the two texts. It seems to me that the difference is more one of form than one of substance.

At the same time, while the Speaker might be expected to know something about procedural interpretation, he is probably not expected to be at the same time a grammatical expert. I suggest indeed that it is not the duty of the Chair to interpret the language of a measure when one text appears to be at variance with or different from the text of the other official language. The difficulty is compounded in this sense that if it were found that there is a real difference between the two texts it would be difficult for the Chair to rule on which of the two reflects the intention of those who have drafted the bill.

During the debate last Friday, it was suggested that the problem could be more usefully considered at the committee stage, when the question could be submitted to the minister's advisers. That suggestion seems to me both practical and reasonable. In fact, any amendment to the preamble or any clause of the bill at the second reading stage would be contrary to the rules.

Is it necessary to add that, according to many precedents, a private member cannot move an amendment to the preamble of a bill. In this connection, I quote May's Parliamentary Practice, 17th edition, in particular the following paragraph to be found on page 548: "Amendments may be made in every part of the bill, whether in the clauses or the schedules. Clauses may be left out and new clauses and schedules added. Amendments to the preamble and title are also admissible where amendments have been made to the bill which render them necessary."

It would seem that while a substantive amendment to the preamble cannot be proposed even in committee, a modification proposed for purposes of clarification or uniformity would not come under the prescription stated by May.

I would therefore suggest that the amendment, if any is required, should be proposed at the committee stage.

I hope that the honourable member for Lotbinière will accept what I am suggesting to him, namely that the very valid question which he raised last Friday could be considered in a more logical, more practical and more efficient way when the bill is studied by the committee.

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Debate was resumed on the motion of Mr. Greene, seconded by Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale),—That Bill C-144, An Act to provide for the manage-