

Most motions, no matter how the government feels about them, are important to someone, or hon. members would not be getting up and proposing them. A number of people are watching these proceedings at this time and feel that you, Mr. Speaker, are saying the motion is unacceptable, and I do not think you should be burdened with that responsibility.

If the House leader wants to make a legitimate change, let him remove this responsibility on the part of the Chair so that the camera crew will be able to pick up the member who says no, withholding consent. In that way those hon. members will have the responsibility.

For some time I have felt that your responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, are very onerous. You are now being asked to assume another responsibility, that of deciding whether there is prejudice against the government in the wording of some of these motions. These motions must be short, sharp, critical, and to the point. If they do not offend the government, in some way they are hardly worth mentioning. As the right hon. member for Prince Albert said on one occasion, if a question does not embarrass the government it embarrasses the person who asks it.

If the House leader wants to provide leadership he should support me in my suggestions regarding unanimous consent. If an hon. member does not have the guts to stand up and be recognized as being in opposition to a motion under Standing Order 43, then there really is no opposition. The Speaker cannot recognize opposition to the granting of unanimous consent when it comes in the form of the word no spoken by an hon. member sitting in his seat. No one should be heard when speaking from his position in his seat. If we make this change it might make your job a little easier, Mr. Speaker, and it will certainly make it clear to the public that you are not really running interference for the government on motions proposed under Standing Order 43.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate. I would like to say only a few words on this matter because I am aware that in the discharge of my responsibilities as a member as well as a minister, motions under Standing Order 43 have prevented me from fully exercising my parliamentary and my ministerial functions which are to answer from time to time questions regarding the administration of my department.

I would like to draw your attention to a fact which indeed has occurred repeatedly in many regards and which is probably very relevant to this debate. Indeed, on October 27 last, the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott) took the opportunity under Standing Order 43 to raise what she considered as an urgent and pressing matter. Of course, as you know, we government members on this side of the House cannot reply immediately to such a question asked by a member of the opposition, specially when it is raised under Standing Order 43. Now, during the oral question period which followed, this same hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton

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was recognized by you, Mr. Speaker, which gave her the opportunity to ask a question which, to my great surprise, was quite different from the one she had raised pursuant to Standing Order 43 before the beginning of the oral question period. And the day after, in the *Ottawa Journal* of Saturday October 28, there was a headline worded as follows and I quote:

[English]

Pigott query on vacant houses goes unanswered.

[Translation]

I believe, Mr. Speaker, this gives us another typical example of the abuse which may come from the part that a member of the opposition can play when he takes advantage of the rules. Rising under the provisions of Standing Order 43, an hon. member makes a certain number of points—knowing full well that the government is not in a position to answer—makes unsubstantiated allegations through the many questions put and then the hon. member sits down, satisfied with having played that part, since he knows the government cannot answer. Now I call your attention on this point, Mr. Speaker, because unfortunately I believe there is abuse of the provisions of Standing Order 43 in this regard and it is very simple to prove since the hon. member did not even have the courage to ask me a question on that subject during the question period. I find it urgent and important, if we are to keep Standing Order 43 and if you, as Speaker, are to continue to allow those questions, that you acknowledge at least that members from both sides of the House are on equal terms and therefore that, not during question period where, of course, you recognize more opposition members who perhaps have less chance than some others to ask questions from ministers, but for motions under Standing Order 43 you should at the very least recognize members to your left and to your right alternately in order to allow for better and fairer use of Standing Order 43 by all backbenchers.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Speaker: Order. It being five o'clock, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker)—Forestry—Task force on future of Canadian Forestry Service; the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski)—Airports—Food and liquor concession at Dorval; the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes)—Environmental Affairs—Forestry—Closing of government laboratories.