

Tabling of Documents

rise to another practice. Here we are dealing with something far different. I think that the two must be kept very separate.

I do not think we should expect you, Sir, to return to us with any definitive reflection upon what you have heard today. I think we should all treat it as a situation of a caveat having been raised. It has now been drawn to the attention of the Chair and the Chair may well want to follow the suggestion of the government House Leader that you call us together for a meeting with you.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). It is certainly up to you, Mr. Speaker, but I do not mind having you reflect upon all of this. We are not expecting any decision to be made on a short term. However, if two years ago it was fair for the Chair to allow 16 days for the Official Opposition to decide if it was ready to vote, then today in 1984, a couple of days should not be indecent. We will take into account very seriously, if this situation occurs again, the precedent of waiting 16 rather than 2 days.

Mr. Nielsen: The motions are different. One is dilatory, one is substantive.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Yukon invites the Chair to reflect. I can assure him that the Chair will give the matter a great deal of reflection. I can also assure the Hon. Member that the Chair will have something to say at an appropriate time after reflecting upon the record.

The Chair would like to put only one item of information before the House. Reference has been made many times to the Chair's communicating with the Parties involved. The channels of communication are informal and imperfect. Whatever communication took place last night was on the initiative of the Chair.

Until five minutes to six o'clock, the Chair had the firm understanding that there would be a vote at six o'clock. This was a communication which had been received by the Chair. The Chair then received a fairly substantial indication indirectly to the effect that a vote would not take place until the following morning, on the basis of which the Chair began to consider its position seriously.

The Chair attempted to negotiate with the Hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Nielsen) through the Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) who conveyed a message to him. The Chair observed that after the message was conveyed, the Hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition and a number of people near him left the House.

Mr. Nielsen: Because we thought there was going to be a vote.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair took that to be an indication that the Hon. Member was accepting the position that there should not be a vote. Surely the Hon. Member for Yukon did not anticipate having the bells ring all night and repeating an experience which did nothing but wear out bells. I think that

80 bells were worn out during the course of the famous bell ringing episode of 1982—

Mr. Evans: And energy.

Mr. Speaker: Not to mention energy wasted. The Chair did attempt communications. However imperfect, the message received by the Chair was that there was no prospect of a vote taking place before the following morning. In this respect, the Chair's decision was on all fours with the decision of Madam Speaker on May, 1983. That is one observation, and the Chair will have a number of other observations to make after mature reflection and careful examination of everything which has been said today.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, since you and not I have raised the matter of last night's communications specifically with respect to myself, I can tell you, Sir, that the message that I received, which caused me to leave the Chamber, was that you were going to cause a vote to be taken at six o'clock without the Whips. That was the message that I received, and I am sure that that practice would be repugnant even to the government House Leader. That is why we left.

Mr. Speaker: The message that the Chair attempted to convey was to indicate the position with regard to the circumstances that were indicated by the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), fully bearing in mind the implication as exposed by the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain and its possible reflection on the Chair. With this in mind, the Chair was fully cognizant of the possible charges that could be raised against it, but the Chair attempted to act by giving everyone an indication of what the objections were. The Chair, however imperfectly, received back a message from the Leader of the Opposition that the Leader of the Opposition, in the circumstances, did not feel that a vote should take place at that time. However imperfect the communication, that was the message received by the Chair.

● (1550)

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, that opens up another area. Nothing could be further from the truth. We were prepared to vote all day yesterday and we were prepared to vote at any time last night, whether before six o'clock or after six o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair, of course, takes the Hon. Member at his word.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TABLING OF EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF COMMISSIONERS OF INTERNAL ECONOMY RESPECTING SALARY REVISIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the Table an extract from minutes of a meeting of the Commissioners of Internal Economy held on Monday, February 20, 1984,