

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT
ACT, 1991

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill C-35, an act to correct certain anomalies, inconsistencies, archaisms and errors in the Statutes of Canada, to deal with other matters of non-controversial and uncomplicated nature therein and to repeal certain provisions thereof that have expired or lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect, be read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee G.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think that the title of the bill sort of explains what the bill is all about, so very briefly I will give an indication of what it is. As the title says, the Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 1991 will give effect to the 1990 proposals for a miscellaneous statute law amendment bill tabled in both Houses of Parliament on February 15, 1990.

The proposals are part of the miscellaneous statutes law amendment program that is an ongoing means of correcting anomalies, inconsistencies, archaisms and errors in federal statutes and of repealing federal enactments that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect.

Those proposals were referred to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Justice and the Solicitor General which reported on them on June 13, 1990. They were then referred to the Standing Committee of the Senate on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in June 1990 and the Senate committee reported on them in February 1991.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments, now embodied in Bill C-35, are proposals that were approved unanimously by both the Senate Committee and the House Committee.

Perhaps I may advise hon. members that after second reading, I intend to ask unanimous consent for proceeding immediately with Committee of the Whole and third reading.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be able to participate in this debate on second reading of Bill C-35.

I want to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, since you have been the one who raised the issue of co-operation from opposition members of Parliament, that Bill C-35 was discussed at House leaders' meetings. We did not believe that we would be proceeding with it today. In fact it was indicated quite clearly that we would be proceeding with the motion with regard to conflict of interest.

However, the government has the right to change the agenda, which it has in this particular instance, and the minister quite rightly has alluded to the chronology of events surrounding the contents of Bill C-35.

The bill itself is a miscellaneous bill affecting a good number of statutes which I will read into the record momentarily. However, I wish to inform members that this is kind of an unusual procedure, unusual in the sense of previous occasions when a miscellaneous statute of this particular magnitude has come forward as it has in previous Parliaments and sessions. It has been customary that there would be a pre-study of the bill by members of Parliament so thereafter, when the minister would come into the House and ask to go to Committee of the Whole, leave would be granted. When he would ask to go on to report stage, third reading, to wrap the bill up, co-operation was always forthcoming.

• (1020)

That is the way it has operated in the past but that is not the way it is operating today.

We have indicated that we would not be able to proceed with this particular bill today, but nevertheless the government has decided to stick with its agenda and bring forward this particular bill.

The bill deals with numerous technical amendments to more than 90 statutes that cover—

An hon. member: How many?

Mr. Dingwall: Ninety federal statutes that cover virtually every facet of the Government of Canada. That is a sizeable number of statutes.