

*Constitution of Canada*

substantive motion. In my view, the hon. member will have to find another way to submit the substantive motion for consideration by the House.

The hon. member quite rightly referred to the fact there was accommodation in another instance when the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond presented a motion which in a way was similar to this one. It was also based on a petition. It was agreed between the representatives of the parties that the matter would be considered by a standing committee of the House. There is that possibility yet, I suppose. I would urge the hon. member to take this up with the representatives of the other parties. I would certainly supply my good offices to the extent they could be helpful in trying to achieve compromise or accommodation as was done when we were met with a similar difficulty some months ago.

[Translation]

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE****TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

First report of Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, in both official languages—Mr. Lessard (LaSalle)

**FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

Second report of Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs—Mr. Kaplan.

[English]

**CONSTITUTION OF CANADA**

**Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Windsor-Walkerville):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the final report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the hon. member for Charlevoix rising on a point of order?

**Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, before this report is tabled, I should like to bring up a point of order.

The document being tabled is extremely important; it deals with the constitutional future and the fundamental laws of the country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this report did not get the unanimous support of the committee. Diverging opinions were voiced about the philosophy of the report and certain chapters.

[Mr. Speaker.]

The hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané) and myself have prepared a minority report and I understand that other members of the committee did so too.

The possibility of members filing minority reports was discussed in committee. That right was refused by the committee.

Mr. Speaker, we claim that this fact contributes to denying the minority the right to express itself. Should permission be denied to table minority reports at the same time as the main report of the committee, I feel that this would constitute a very serious reflection on democracy.

• (1420)

Mr. Speaker, the committee in question is not like other committees; it is a special committee and, on referring back to Votes and Proceedings, one finds that this committee is called the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada. And I emphasize this point: it is not an ordinary but a special committee.

I would now like to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the following fact: it is obvious that, according to some practices of the House, minority reports on standing committees of the House—and I say "standing"—cannot be tabled at the same time as the main report. And in my view, this is wise. Here is why: it is obvious that when standing committees are called upon to study a public bill or a government measure, it is not possible to accept minority reports from such standing committees.

It would not seem to me that the Chair could have accepted, let us say on the proceedings of the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, minority reports regarding legislation introduced by the government.

May I ask, Mr. Speaker, whether there could be a little more order in the House so that I can make myself heard. It is of course not pleasing to hear French spoken in this House, but nevertheless I should like my hon. friends to hear my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a regular but a special committee in which no government policy is involved and—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am sorry I must interrupt the hon. member, but I agree with him.

[English]

These private conversations which are going on in the House are very embarrassing to the hon. member who has the floor and certainly make it difficult for the Chair to understand what is being said by the hon. member.

[Translation]

I suggest that hon. members having conversations or discussions to carry on do so as much as possible behind the curtains, in the lobbies.

**Mr. Asselin:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, that joint special committee was in no way involved in government policy. That is why I say that because of that we should depart from the general rule adopted in the House to the effect that no minority reports can be submitted following proceedings of a permanent committee of the House. As this is a special committee, I feel that it should be allowed,