

Point of Order—Mr. Knowles

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, that was the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. I was going to raise a special question of privilege with regard to him. I do not mind him wearing a bow tie but I do not know if it is within the rules of the House of Commons that he should wear the kitchen curtains! If he will just keep quiet I will finish speaking on this very serious motion. I am sure he will understand or remove himself from the chamber.

• (2110)

On rare occasions, with minor exceptions, what appears in the record of debate has actually been spoken in the House. I do not have to point this out to you, Madam Speaker. This is the House of Commons and it is part of Parliament. What is the origin of Parliament? Does it derive from the French word *parler* which means "to speak", to participate, or to debate? This is a forum. This is not a congressional hall in which we come forward and table documents which purport to be speeches. There are rules of which you are well aware. The rule is that no member can do this. Occasionally one is observed doing so, more in the breach rather than—I must admit that sometimes I am subject to cheating on the rules as well—

Some hon. Members: Oh, no.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: —but only in the first week I was here, Madam Speaker. The fact is that Members of Parliament are not allowed to read their speeches. That is the rule of the House of Commons. Members are supposed to speak from the heart, from the bosom.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I simply want to say that is Parliament. It is not a question of tabling of documents or of somehow being able to get some researcher in your office to prepare something for you as a very scholarly treatise and then put it on the record. That particular objection would make this motion itself defective. It offends against the very principle of Parliament. It offends against the principles of the House of Commons where debate takes place, where the give and take of debate goes on and where members on the government side are able to participate occasionally by heckling, which has been the extent of their participation over the course of this Parliament.

I simply say to you, Madam Speaker, that is the nature of this House, and any motion which permits or directs those of us who want to participate in this debate as having the option of tabling and having appended to *Hansard* a speech prepared in our offices is offensive. It is offensive under the rules in the legal and parliamentary sense and it is simply not acceptable.

When we look at the motion itself, it underlines the basic objection I think I have with respect to it. It is a motion which purports to curtail the rights of Members of Parliament to participate in this debate; it limits the rights of members. I suggest to you, as Speaker of this House, that this motion must be carefully examined and allowed only if strictly to be found in accordance with the Standing Orders and precedents of the House of Commons. This is an important debate.

In the reading of the motion itself, and as my learned colleague, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton has said, the motion itself is confusing, it is unclear as to its consequences.

I want to bring to Your Honour's attention that we now have before us a resolution brought by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) on behalf of the Prime Minister, who finally spoke at length yesterday. I will not get into that because I am still waking up from the effects.

When one looks at this motion, it purports to do two things. First, in the preamble it outlines that there has been debate only on the amendment introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) up to this point, and that is quite right. But Your Honour will note as well that you have not, nor have any of the occupants in your chair in your absence, called to order any member of the House of Commons with respect to remarks dealing only with the specific amendment put forward by my colleague from Provencher. If one goes over the record and reads the speeches, he will see they cover the waterfront. They deal with every aspect of the constitutional debate. They deal with the consideration of what members who have participated feel about their country, about what they think should be included or excluded in this resolution and about the process. By no means can it be said that Members of Parliament here have been restricted by the fact that we have been debating a technically narrow amendment as put forward by the hon. member for Provencher. Indeed, the other interpretation is probably more appropriate. There has been no restriction. Your Honour understood, as I think did the other occupants of the chair, the gravity of this particular motion, this resolution, and the importance and the necessity to show flexibility in the interpretation of the rules respecting participation of members.

What does this motion purport to do? In effect it says that after the motion has been passed there will be two or four days of debate. After two days maximum, provided there are no further speakers, or speeches stop before that time, the amendment put forward by my colleague from Provencher will then be brought to a vote. The second part of this motion says that another two days can pass and after those two days all other amendments not then voted on must be called, with the resolution itself voted on at 15 minutes before the witching hour at the end of that time.

The motion is defective. The rights of Members of Parliament are being limited by this motion. The motion does not contemplate or ensure the ability of Members of Parliament to bring forward amendments. We will certainly have one amendment because there are two days in which to do that. But it is quite within the realm of contemplation that whoever is recognized first, whether we have to vote to see whether it is the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, whoever gets the Speaker's eye after that vote will have his or her amendment put forward. Then there will very likely be no opportunity for any other amendment to come forward. The implication is that Members of Parliament are being deprived of the ability to bring forward amendments to this resolution. It is an infringement upon our rights. It is a defect in this motion. If I were to