

*Divorce Law Reform*

Mr. Chairman, government of men is unpredictable. I think that none knows this better than the hon. member for Villeneuve.

[English]

**Mr. Brewin:** Mr. Speaker, although I do not wish to put forward, as a reason why we should not proceed with this bill, the suggestion that I or other English speaking members of this house are not prepared to proceed, yet I think it is proper to say, just as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau) has said that he did not expect to proceed with this matter, that some others of us did not hear that we were to proceed until I think noon today. As the matter is one of transcendent importance in principle, I believe that possibly it would be far better if we did not attempt to proceed to second reading tonight. I should like to have an opportunity to compare the clauses of this bill with the recommendations made by the joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons. This could not be done in a few minutes. I would like to see how the bill as drafted compares with the resolutions which were presented to the joint committee on this matter. I would also like to have a little time in which to think about the principles which are new, which are novel perhaps and which are sweeping matters of social reform, before proceeding with second reading of this bill.

I would not raise any of these matters if an arrangement to the contrary were made by the house leader, but when we hear that our French speaking colleagues did not have a copy of this bill before them until a few minutes ago, if I understood them correctly, then, although I accept what the house leader has said, to the effect that this is regular, I ask whether it is fair for the members of this house to suggest that we proceed under these circumstances.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Why did you not think of this during the orders of the day?

**Mr. MacEachen:** As we all know, it is a responsibility of the government to lay down the business for the consideration of the house. Last night I indicated the various possibilities which could constitute the business of the house today. I indicated that I would consult with the house leaders concerning an appropriate order of business. That was done.

It is unfortunate that the representative of the Ralliement Cr ditiste was not present.

[M. Trudeau.]

I did, however, give the house the information during the orders of the day. I should like to take into account the feelings of hon. members who wish to consider the bill in the French language. In order to do that I am quite prepared, at a later stage this evening, to adjourn the debate on second reading so that members will have an opportunity to consider further the principles which are involved in the bill. Then the bill can be considered some time later next week. I believe that to be a fair proposal. It meets the points of view which have been expressed.

The Minister of Justice is prepared to make an opening statement. Hon. members who are prepared now could then make their statements, and then we can move the adjournment of the debate and revive it later, thus not asking the house tonight to make any decision on second reading. The rights of every hon. member will be fully protected. I think this is a fair proposal. At a certain moment we will move the adjournment of the debate.

[Translation]

**Mr. Laprise:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to prolong indefinitely this discussion on the procedure of the house. I accept the suggestion of the minister, and I hope that he will profit by this happening.

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I believe the chair has heard sufficient evidence now to make a ruling on the point of order, or at least make a suggestion to the house. I should, of course, quote standing order 74 which reads as follows:

All bills shall be printed before the second reading in the English and French languages.

As this bill was given first reading last night, and as there was a change in the order of business, I am sure all members of the house will understand the difficulty in which the house now finds itself. If however, there are members who are willing to speak on second reading of the bill now, they could do so and then an opportunity could be given to the other members who would like time to study the bill further. May I suggest to the house that we proceed now with the second reading, on the understanding that the procedure is always open, to any member of this house who wishes to do so, to adjourn the debate.

If the hon. member for Chapeau (Mr. Laprise), the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) or the hon. member for Lapointe