

Tabling of Documents

whole range of things that are done during the day, so that you can move a motion, for example, and apply it in these circumstances to proceed to Orders of the Day. I repeat, the various portions or items listed under Routine Proceedings are not orders or stages of debate.

If that is the case, then the motion proposed by the Deputy Government House Leader is not in order. Or, putting it another way, you cannot move a superseding motion when there is no item before the House to be superseded. I repeat, a stage of Routine Proceedings is not an item of debate. One could not, for instance, move a motion to extend the sitting under Standing Order 9(4) to consider Routine Proceedings because that Standing Order refers to an item being debated, and I am saying that Routine Proceedings are not items being debated. So if an item is not debatable there cannot be a superseding motion because there is no debate to be superseded.

With respect to Routine Proceedings, that daily routine is very important to this House. I think, Sir, you ruled last fall that it was in order to move from one item of Routine Proceedings to the next by means of a motion which, if necessary, can be voted on by this House. However, if that is the case I think it follows that, as I have said, you cannot skip a whole lot of items by a motion supported by the majority of government Members in this House to go to another one further down the line which the Government wants to reach.

So I say with the utmost respect to the ingenious arguments offered by the Government House Leader that they still do not have a persuasive effect, such that you should rule that the motion of the Deputy Government House Leader is in order; but rather that you should, on the basis of the points I and others who have objected to the acceptability of the motion have made, rule that it is not in order. Instead, each item of Routine Proceedings must be reached, and if the Government does not want to have them dealt with it must move a motion as each item of Routine Proceedings is reached to go on to the next one. I think this reflects both what our Standing Orders say, what the precedents say, and also reflects the importance of Routine Proceedings in the operations of this House of Commons and, therefore, their importance in the operation of our parliamentary system.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to make a couple of remarks with respect to the motion now before the House.

As Your Honour will appreciate, the motion was moved by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader immediately upon the calling of the item "Tabling of Documents". The item "Tabling of Documents" is there for a very specific purpose. It is an item which permits the tabling of documents. It is not an item which permits any form of debate on the tabling of those documents. That is an important point.

• (1150)

Had the Parliamentary Secretary risen and tabled a document, he would not have been in a position to move a motion or to debate anything. He would merely have been in a position of taking a document and presenting it to someone, and that would be the end of it. Surely the first point is that under the guise of "Tabling of Documents", the Parliamentary Secretary has moved a motion which is clearly not in order.

The second point is that the House is governed by precedent. In the absence of very clear direction from the Standing Orders, the House is governed by precedent. What the Parliamentary Secretary is attempting to do today has already been attempted on another occasion, and Your Honour has already made a ruling in respect of the matter.

I draw to Your Honour's attention the proceedings of the House on November 24, 1986. On that occasion, immediately following the presentation of petitions, the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council (Mr. Mazankowski) rose in his place to move the following motion, as reported at page 1435 of *Hansard*:

That the House proceed to Government Notices of Motions.

That is precisely what the Parliamentary Secretary is attempting to do once again today. Immediately members on this side rose to intervene in respect of the propriety of the matter, but Your Honour, without hearing any representations at that time, said the following:

The motion is that the House proceed to Government Notices of Motions, which means that, if the Chair should rule that it is in order, a number of items that are in the usual order under Routine Proceedings would not be heard. It is the view of the Chair that that would be inappropriate and that we should proceed from item to item. Consequently, I regret to advise the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister that in the view of the Chair the motion is out of order.

The motion was out of order on November 24, 1986, and it remains just as out of order today. There has been no subsequent ruling by Your Honour in any way varying this previous ruling. There has been no change in the Standing Orders which would supersede this very learned ruling of the Chair. In view of the fact that this very important ruling has not been in any way overruled, either by Your Honour or by the House by way of changes to the Standing Orders, surely the long-standing practices and traditions of the House must govern. That would require that this precedent be observed in this case as well.

In response to the comments made by the President of the Privy Council, I want to note what he said. He was looking for a way out of a legislative log-jam. He says that he wants to get on to the debate of Bill C-22, the legislation which would have such a devastating impact upon the elderly, the poor, and the disabled in Canada. He accuses the Opposition of delaying. He accuses the Opposition of trying to avoid debate on Bill C-22. However, the item of business before the House today under Government Orders is listed as No. 22, which is:

Resuming consideration of report stage of Bill C-22, an Act to amend the Patent Act—