

an amendment similar to that which is proposed now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say a word to show that even if the argument advanced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) might have seemed, at first, justified, when you read over the motion in its present form, I think that Beauchesne's citation which was just read to us, does not apply to the amendment, as it is drafted now.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said, and rightly so, that an amendment to prevent the second reading of the bill means in fact a complete rejection of the bill. This is what happens here. The amendment means simply this: That Bill No. C-168 be not read the second time. It is a total rejection. And the second part, Mr. Speaker, simply adds that any new consideration of a bill such as this one cannot be undertaken unless it has been preceded by a referendum. Why was this added? Well, I suppose it is because we have been presented twice with the same problem. We considered this matter, about 1½ or 2 years ago, and it is being reintroduced without having done anything about it. Therefore, it is a pure and simple rejection of the bill and it is requested also that the same matter be not considered again until such time as the Canadian population has been asked to decide through a referendum.

The argument of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is unacceptable because it is, in fact, a complete rejection of the bill, since the precedent still holds, namely that the matter was considered 1½ years ago. The bill was rejected by parliament and it is felt that the matter should not be raised again unless the public has studied it or has voted on the matter through a referendum.

This is why, in my opinion, the argument of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is unacceptable at the present time, due to the form of the amendment which is entirely legal, which does not violate any precedent and is in accordance with standing orders.

[*English*]

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question. Would he deal with my contention that the amendment in effect is a substantive motion introducing a new proposition, namely a referendum?

Amendments Respecting Death Sentence

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: No, Mr. Speaker. It does in no way imply a referendum. As worded, the amendment does not suggest that the government hold a referendum. It does not provide for a referendum.

The amendment does not suggest at all the holding of a referendum. It simply asks that the bill be not read a second time and that, if the government wishes to reintroduce the question, it should hold a referendum beforehand. However, the government does not have to introduce the bill. In addition, the amendment does not suggest a referendum, but merely provides that any further consideration of the bill be delayed until the question, submitted to the Canadian people, has been approved in principle. It is not suggested that a referendum be held. If the government does not wish to hold one, let it refrain from doing so. The amendment does not mention that the government is required or has to hold a referendum.

If we vote for the amendment, Mr. Speaker, this does not mean that we vote to request or force the government to hold a referendum on this matter. That is not mentioned in the amendment. The amendment under study does not recommend a referendum; it simply requests that the bill be not given second reading at this time, and that the matter be not submitted again to the house until a national referendum has been held. However, the government does not have to hold this referendum.

[*English*]

Mr. Knowles: Would the hon. member permit a further question, Mr. Speaker. If the amendment is not suggesting a referendum, then how can it be said that the amendment calls for a total rejection of the bill? Is it not just a temporary rejection until the referendum has been taken?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: No, it means pure and simple rejection, total rejection of the bill. Now, and this is where the precedent set 18 months ago must be taken into account, as the government was confronted with a similar motion 18 months ago, and as the motion was rejected, this amendment adds: Do not come back to us with a bill similar to this one unless you have held a referendum. You do not have to hold one; if you do not want any, then do not hold one. But if you must come back to us with a bill such as this one, then hold a referendum before doing so.