

what was contained in the bill that was to be reported back from the committee for consideration under the order for report stage.

As a result of that dilemma we were unable to file the amendments we wished to file with the *Journals* branch since we had not seen the bill in advance of six o'clock last evening. As a result the amendments could not appear as notice on the Order Paper. That creates a dilemma, Madam Speaker.

We consider the amendments that we wished to file to be of extreme importance. I personally asked the government whip last evening if the government would be prepared to give unanimous consent for the hour for filing to be extended until some time today so that we could file our proposed amendments—we thought there could be an extension until five o'clock today—for consideration on Monday next. Unfortunately at that point unanimous consent was not forthcoming, although it may well be forthcoming now.

In the circumstances, the only opportunity for anyone in the House to move amendments to the clauses of the bill that will ultimately be debated at both report stage and third reading, is right now. Since there is no other opportunity to move and debate those amendments, I suggest one of two things might occur.

First, I would ask whether the government House leader or the acting government House leader might consider requesting the unanimous consent of the House to do what was requested yesterday; that we should file the amendments up to and including five o'clock this evening for consideration on Monday. Failing that, would the government House leader consider not proceeding with that order, given that we would only have 40 or 45 minutes today to deal with it, in order that we could file within the Standing Orders today, for Monday's consideration. This is not a trivial matter; it is of vital importance and speaks to the concerns of large numbers of employees all across the country. We assumed that we would be able to fulfil the responsibility of placing important amendments before the House.

● (1510)

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, with regard to the first point of the House leader of the NDP, we are prepared to agree to a House order which would extend the time for filing amendments to five o'clock today. Rather than becoming involved in a debate as to what we do if we cannot obtain such agreement, perhaps we could first determine whether or not the agreement is forthcoming from all parties. We are agreeable to it.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, this is beyond belief.

Some hon. Members: That is correct.

Mr. Nielsen: We have had the spectacle of the government House leader rising in his place yesterday and saying, as reported on page 14896 of *Hansard* which I now have:

—considering the urgency of Bill C-78, we will debate it tomorrow.

Point of Order—Mr. Deans

Further on he is reported as saying:

Considering the urgency, we have decided to proceed with the report stage of Bill C-78 tomorrow.

Bill C-78 was so urgent at three o'clock yesterday that we did not even have a printed copy of it available. Indeed, it was not even in the mail to hon. members until this morning. Our critic received it this morning. What shallow deception, considering the urgency of Bill C-78 which had not even been printed. Under the circumstances I think the government would be well advised to move a motion that the time for filing amendments be extended, in all fairness to the disposition of this day, to when the bill comes up on Monday, if it is so urgent that it might come up on Monday. I would support such a motion.

Mr. Deans: Madam Speaker, I have one point. I must confess that I am not particularly worried whether we do it by unanimous consent, by motion or by any other means. My concern simply is that we have urgent amendments and we would like an opportunity to file them this afternoon. They are already there; we simply have to give *Journals* authorization to have them printed for Monday.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, ordinarily we would have no hesitation in giving unanimous consent, but we want to point out dramatically the hypocrisy and downright deception of the government. On two separate occasions yesterday, the government House leader said that the bill was so urgent it had to be proceeded with today, a bill which was not even printed. The government should bring in a motion to extend the time. We would be very happy to support it, to focus the spotlight on their hypocrisy, where it belongs.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, one could be left to draw the conclusion that somehow there is a conspiracy on the part of the government to deny hon. members of the opposition a copy of the bill as amended in committee. It should be pointed out that printing of the bill is not the responsibility of the government. It is the responsibility of the law clerk. If the Conservative Party had members at the committee, they would have followed the amendments made in committee and would have all necessary information in order to file amendments, and perhaps might have required line changes when it came out. If in fact there was a problem in getting the reprinted version to members as quickly as possible, it had nothing to do with the government; it is the responsibility of the law clerk.

If we look at Standing Order 75(3), it is quite clear that we have complied with what is necessary in order for report stage of any bill to be reported by a standing committee. It indicates that it "shall not be taken into consideration prior to 48 hours following the presentation of the said report, unless otherwise ordered by the House". It was several days ago, in excess of 48 hours, that in fact it was reported. It should be pointed out that the House leader of the NDP requested this last night and that this side was agreeable. I think the House leader of the Conservative Party wished to consult with his critic, the hon.