

Immigration Act, 1976

The Special Committee on Reform of the House of Commons of the House went to a great deal of trouble to eliminate that possibility. One of the ways in which we were to eliminate that possibility was by having a 15 minute bell when the bell would ring for 15 minutes and then there would be a vote, and if there was a 30 minute bell, the bells would ring for 30 minutes and then there would be a vote.

This point of order is not over nothing; it is about something which could be very dangerous. I say that to Members because they know it. I could see it on their faces last night. They knew what was happening. This should not happen again. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Speaker: The matter that has been raised this morning was brought to my attention earlier today and I very deeply regret that it happened. I will consider carefully what Hon. Members from all three Parties have said. I do want to reiterate that there is a tradition in this place that sometimes the Chair is guided by the disposition of the Whips. That is a tradition which we may well not want to abolish completely.

However, the extension of the bells last night was lengthy. I think the Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) probably, if he had been less inclined to be the gentleman he is, might have indicated at least part of the reason for that extension. I think Hon. Members perhaps know that part of the reason for that extension was a courtesy extended in the best traditions of this place to those from one Party to another.

The point that has been raised I take seriously and I will come back with some comments which I hope will be of some guidance to the House, without at the same time being so severe that Whips among themselves will be constrained from exercising upon occasion some appropriate common sense.

What happened last night was regrettable, and I am very sorry it happened. I will do everything I can to ensure that it does not happen again: I will come back with some measured comments which I hope will be accepted by all Members of the House. I thank all Members for intervening this morning. Their comments were helpful to the Chair.

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CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

On the Order: Private Members' Business:

Second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-258, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (War crimes and crimes against Humanity)—Mr. Kaplan.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have before the House an amendment to the Criminal Code, Bill C-258, dealing with war crimes. I moved the Bill in the hope that whether or not it was passed, it would encourage the Government to bring in its own Bill. The Government has done so.

The Bill has received three readings and has been sent to the Senate.

In light of that, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw my Bill.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Government took independent action as a result of the Deschênes Commission and brought forward the report. The legislation which was brought forward by the Government flowed directly from the Deschênes Commission report. We passed it last weekend. We are satisfied that we have taken action finally, after a long, long time, and, therefore, we are prepared to give our consent that the Bill be withdrawn.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, we are certainly prepared to concur with the request.

I would also like to use the occasion to recognize the contribution made by the Hon. Member, in co-operation with other Members of the House, namely, the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson), for many, many years, in terms of focusing attention on this issue, and the Government, as the Minister has indicated, has acted.

I think that shows that when Members of the House of Commons are persistent and steadfast in their commitment to seeing certain legislation introduced, in the end it works well. Again, Mr. Speaker, we certainly lend our consent to the request.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) for his comments and I must say I agree with them.

Order discharged and Bill withdrawn.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

IMMIGRATION ACT, 1976

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, August 31, consideration of Bill C-84, an Act to amend the Immigration Act, 1976 and the Criminal Code in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina) moved:
Motion No. 16

That Bill C-84 be amended in Clause 9 by striking out lines 25 to 40 at page 8 and lines 1 to 14 at page 9.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this clause of Bill C-84 has aroused more comment than perhaps all the other clauses of the Bill put together, among many people, not just those directly engaged in refugee work but editorialists and others.