

However, we have not suspended Rules 29 and 30, which read as follows:

29. A senator who has moved the second reading of a bill or made a substantive motion shall have a right of final reply, but not otherwise.

30. The final reply provided for in rule 29 closes the debate. It is the duty of the Speaker to ensure that every senator wishing to speak has the opportunity to do so before the final reply.

Honourable senators, by suspending Rule 28 we have created a rather awkward situation. The sponsor of a bill, or the mover of a substantive motion, is put in an inferior position to any other senator. Any senator has the right to speak four, five, six or ten times, if he wishes, but the mover of a motion or the sponsor of a bill may not. On rising a second time, such a senator, under Rule 29 would be, in effect, closing the debate. It creates a rather difficult situation, and it puts the mover of a bill or of a substantive motion in rather an inferior position vis-à-vis the other members of the Senate, who may speak ten times if they wish. I therefore suggest to His Honour and to honourable members that consideration should be given to this question and to the desirability of having the Standing Senate Committee on Standing Rules and Orders meet to examine the problem.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I shall take the point under advisement. It may be that when the sitting resumes on Tuesday next I shall be in a position to give a detailed opinion on the point that has been raised by the Leader of the Opposition. At the moment, without prejudicing any decision I might come to after examining the matter more thoroughly, may I point out now that Rule 28, which has been suspended for the remainder of this session, mentions that a senator shall not speak twice. Thus, when we decided to suspend this rule I took for granted that its suspension would then allow an honourable senator to speak twice. I did not have the understanding that it meant an honourable senator could speak as often as he wished.

As I have implied, I merely throw that out as my first impression for your consideration. I will take the point under advisement until Tuesday next, but in the meantime I will hear the views of any honourable senator who wishes to speak on the point of order raised by the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: Did the Leader of the Government not intend to speak on this point of order?

Hon. Mr. Martin: I enjoy receiving an invitation to speak from Senator Choquette. I would go further and say that there should be no restrictions imposed upon any honourable senator who finds himself in the situation in which Senator Argue now is. I think that he should have complete freedom to join in the thrust of debate, and I have no doubt that he can handle the situation with great credit to himself.

[Hon. Mr. Flynn.]

Hon. Mr. Choquette: I do not see that there can be any possibility of restriction, if we suspend that rule. Then we shall have to substitute another rule saying that only twice will he be able to speak, and not three or four times. So I do not see the slightest possibility of saying to an honourable senator, "Let it be understood, from now on, that this rule is suspended and senators are entitled to speak twice."

Hon. Mr. Martin: In saying that, I feel sure that Senator Choquette fails to take into account the fact that His Honour is, indeed, an able and ingenious Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Argue: Honourable senators, I appreciate the solicitude and magnanimity the Leader of the Government has evidenced in his being concerned that I should have the opportunity to speak many times. I do not want that opportunity, but merely to speak twice and close the debate.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS IN THE SENATE GALLERY

PREMIER AND CABINET MINISTERS OF ANTIGUA

Hon. Paul Martin: Honourable senators, before we proceed I should like to take advantage of this moment to direct attention to the fact that the Premier of Antigua, the Honourable George Walter, and two of his ministers, the Honourable Donald Halstead and the Honourable Seldon Walter, are in our gallery.

Premier Walter took over the direction of the affairs of the Government of Antigua in the month of February. I reminded him a few moments ago of the very close interest and association that Canada has with his island country as with other Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean. I also pointed out to him that the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs had shown special interest in the Commonwealth Caribbean, as indicated by the thorough study it made last year of Canada-Caribbean relations.

We are very honoured to have Premier George Walter of Antigua and his colleagues within the precincts of Parliament today, and, more particularly, in the Senate. The Government of Canada is pleased to have them in Canada at this time.

CONSUMER PACKAGING AND LABELLING BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Leopold Langlois moved the third reading of Bill C-180, respecting the packaging, labelling, sale, importation and advertising of prepackaged and certain other products.

Motion agreed to and bill, as amended, read third time and passed.