

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership

citation 234, both the first and second paragraphs and, as the hon. member has just mentioned, citation 241, convince me that the Leader of the Opposition has complete freedom to range over as wide an area as he likes until he reaches the point where he moves an amendment. Following that he should confine his remarks to what is contained in the amendment.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, these are most extraordinary propositions which are now being advanced to you from the other side of the house, and in my respectful submission they are entirely against the course of decisions from the Chair in this house. This is not the first time this point has been raised in just such circumstances, when the Leader of the Opposition has started out in the opening speech in a debate on a supply motion and has approached the matter by a discussion of many subjects. This is not a repetition of a debate in reply to the speech from the throne. This is not a budget debate. This is a debate under strict rules.

I wish to come directly to the point raised by the hon. member for Inverness-Richmond, for I think he has quite misled himself in his reading of citation of 241 in Beauschesne. The principle is well established, Mr. Speaker, and in my submission it is a principle that is designed to accord fair play and equal treatment to all members of the house. Broadly it is that on such a motion the house deals with and debates one grievance at a time.

You can find many citations on this point in the old days before debate on such motions was limited to two days. We had many cases then where the Chair firmly enforced the rule that no member could introduce a new subject until the debate on the subject immediately under discussion had been concluded. The basis of that rule is that the house deals with one grievance at a time, and the Chair affords to all members of the house the right to speak on that grievance before any hon. member may introduce a different or new grievance.

This point has been raised before, Mr. Speaker. I had occasion to raise it in the last parliament on several occasions with the Leader of the Opposition because he was developing the habit in leading off on supply motions—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):—of making these shotgun approaches where he talks about a number of subjects and then finally comes to rest on a particular amendment dealing with some subject. Then everybody else from that point on is limited to a discussion of that

particular subject until that amendment is disposed of or until the amendment to the amendment is disposed of.

Now, Mr. Speaker, far from justifying the interpretation put upon it by the hon. member for Inverness-Richmond, citation 241 reads in the diametrically opposite way. The second clause of that citation reads:

On the motion that the Speaker leave the chair for committee of supply, a member, before any amendment has been moved, may speak on a certain subject—

Not a whole lot of subjects, not cover the waterfront, but he may speak on a certain subject. It is not just any subject: it is a certain subject.

Mr. McIlraith: Read the rest of it.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It is one that is clearly defined, and it is not a situation in which he can rake up all the grievances of which he can think.

Then, the balance of the citation reads, that he may introduce an amendment in the last moments accorded to him dealing with another subject. But, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing there that says he can depart, until he reaches the introduction of the amendment, one iota from that certain subject upon which he commenced to speak. The rule, Mr. Speaker, is crystal clear.

I was the one who took objection in the last parliament on March 31, 1961, when the Speaker made a ruling to which reference was made by the hon. member for Muskoka-Parry Sound. It was on this very point and Mr. Speaker Michener found it necessary on that occasion to tell the Leader of the Opposition that it was not proper to go on discussing a lot of grievances and then come down in the end on some particular one in the amendment. He must speak about a particular grievance. Surely after half an hour of speaking the Leader of the Opposition should have completed his introduction, even affording him most generous latitude in so far as introductory matters are concerned. Surely, the point has been reached where he must now be confined to a certain subject in accordance with the rules.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have recognized that there are many opportunities given to this house for unlimited scope in terms of the subject matter of debate. There is the throne speech debate and the budget debate, as well as other occasions. The citations given in Beauschesne are dicta that I might follow, in certain circumstances. I think my case for ruling that the subject matter must be fairly narrowly defined is based on Mr. Speaker Beaudoin's precedent which I cited to the house earlier. This is the ground upon which