

Government Orders

What we are doing is highly extraordinary. Normally we would have an idea that the legislation was going to be proceeded with. We would have an idea of how the groupings would occur in terms of the motions. I think this has caught us all by surprise. We have people who want to debate this particular motion. They were not aware it was going to be up at this point.

There appears to be some difference in approach. We want to carry on a very learned debate, in particular with those who played a role in the committee and have an interest in how we participate. Would people consider calling it one o'clock so we can pick up the debate at three o'clock in a more meaningful way? It will also allow the Chair to make the deliberations in terms of how the motions ought to be grouped.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to discuss with my hon. friend how we should organize debate on this. It was my understanding that we would be proceeding with this piece of legislation as soon as the other piece of legislation that preceded it was dealt with. I am sure that was the understanding on both sides of the House.

There is a motion to amend the bill before the House which was moved by my friend from Mount Royal. Two members on the Liberal side were seeking the Chair's attention at the time I rose. I do not see the difficulty in continuing.

If there is a disposition on the part of my colleagues opposite to have the debate completed during a reasonable period of time I am certainly agreeable to rising now if they would like to do so. If there is not such an agreement then I believe we should continue to debate it now and not simply give up House time that could otherwise be used profitably.

Mr. Riis: My friend the minister is correct up to a point. We were going to complete the work on Bill C-101, amendments to the labour code, but of course we have not done that. Some rather extraordinary interplay within the House has not been concluded so consequently the understanding we had did not transpire.

• (1230)

I want to say to my friend, the minister, that we have asked for a more reasoned approach to debating this

legislation which I think is very appropriate. It is important legislation and there is a considerable interest in it in the country. If the minister is not prepared to proceed in a more orderly fashion to permit people to participate, we have no intention of entering into any agreement to wrap this up quickly. We have a lot of people who want to debate it and the less positive reaction from the minister will guarantee there will be more people wanting to debate this as the week continues.

I am asking for some serious effort here in terms of being able to proceed in a business-like, orderly way, as opposed to having to deal with legislation by surprise.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I do not see the point in continuing this debate. I understand the surprise of the hon. member for Kamloops and thank him and the Minister of Communications for expressing their points of view.

I simply want to remind the House that the Chair's decision has been made and that we are simply consulting now. It is customary in Parliament for the Speaker to consult before rendering his full decision. These consultations have taken place on almost all the proposed amendments, I would say.

There is no problem if the Chair proposes at least the motions that were selected. We know that it is up to the Chair to consider each motion carefully to see whether it is in order, to group together the motions on the same subject and to reject those that are out of order.

The Chair immediately selected Motion No. 2, as well as Motion No. 1, which we can perhaps debate before lunch if time permits. So there is no major inconvenience with beginning and even completing consideration of Motion No. 2 if hon. members so desire, even though the Chair has not rendered its decision in full.

So I respectfully submit that we should continue the debate on Motion No. 2 which will deprive no one of his or her legitimate right to speak.

[*English*]

Mr. MacWilliam: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I listened very carefully to the Chair's explanation and I agree that the Chair has had the opportunity to peruse the motions and ascertain which motions are not redundant and therefore debatable.