

Government Orders

• (1755)

They actually want to talk to the people they have been running away from for the last couple of years, to people out there who want to talk to them about the GST, to tell them what they feel about the GST, to people who wanted to tell them what was on their minds about closing rural post offices but could not find them. They were not answering their telephones or their letters. These people could not have their petitions raised in the House of Commons. People would send petitions over there and not get a response. So they sent them to us and we would raise them on behalf of the people of St. John's East, Peace River, Calgary and all these other places across the country. These were people who were disenfranchised, in effect, people whose members had abandoned them for the last two years. Now, thanks be to goodness, miracles never cease to happen. Those same people over there have had their road to Damascus experience. They have seen the light and now want to go home and talk to the same people who heretofore they kept running away from on GST, on fisheries issues, and on so many other issues.

I see that for now my time is up. I thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and will have a little more to say another day.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member. At another moment of course he will have the right to continue. However, now I am called upon to report to the House on a matter that was raised on Monday.

On Monday, April 8, 1991, the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing rose on a point of order concerning Government Motion No. 30, the motion dealing with the proposed changes to the Standing Orders of the House.

The hon. member argued cogently that this motion contains many distinct propositions. He then went on to ask the Chair "to divide Motion No. 30 into five distinct motions and to permit each to be debated, amended and voted on separately".

The hon. government House leader, the hon. member for Kamloops and the hon. member for Calgary West contributed to the brief discussion that ensued. The Chair took the matter under advisement and undertook to return to the House as soon as possible. I am now prepared to rule on the matter.

Government Motion No. 30 now being debated consists of 64 separate proposals, as well as paragraphs relating to its coming into force. I have carefully considered the motion and the arguments put forward by hon. members. I have equally carefully reviewed the weight of precedent and practice with regard to the Chair's discretionary power in such a situation.

Although it is clear that the Speaker has the authority to divide complicated questions, it is equally true that this power has only very rarely been exercised. In this situation, I have been guided by the cautionary note sounded by Speaker Lamoureux in his ruling of March 23, 1966:

It is only in exceptional circumstances and when there is little doubt about it that the Speaker can intervene and, of his own initiative, amend the resolution proposed by an hon. member.

Therefore, after serious reflection, I undertook discussions with the leadership of the three parties. Following those consultations, I wish to inform the House that the Chair proposes to deal with Government Motion No. 30 in this manner. All proposals will be debated together but they will be voted upon in three groupings, those groupings being: proposals relating to private members' business, namely those numbered 38 through 45 and 60 through 64; proposals relating to committees, namely those numbered 46 through 59; and all other proposals, namely those numbered 1 through 37, as well as those separate un-numbered paragraphs relating to the terms and conditions of the coming into force of the motion.

With regard to the amendment of the hon. House leader of the Official Opposition, a division on that question will precede the divisions on the groupings I have just outlined.

In summary, then, there will be a single debate on Motion No. 30 and the House will vote on the motion in the following manner: (1) a vote on the amendment of Mr. Dingwall, (2) a vote on the proposals relating to Private Members' Business, (3) a vote on the proposals relating to committees, (4) a vote on all other proposals including the paragraphs relating to the coming into force of the motion.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all hon. members for their contribution to the Chair's consideration of this question. Your co-operation does great credit to this place and obviously obviates the necessity of the Chair to make unilateral interventions that might be of some difficulty in terms of precedents to both sides at some later date. I thank hon. members.