

Government Orders

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants to speak, he will have to deal with the motion we will be moving in this House. I suggest therefore that the Orders of the Day be called.

[English]

The Speaker: I did call Orders of the Day. I was looking for unanimous consent to the motion put forward by the member. I am going to ask once again.

A motion was put forward by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands asking for unanimous consent. Did I misunderstand? That is the motion that I put to the House. It is very simple. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, we just finished giving third reading to this bill providing for the resumption of work by rail workers.

[English]

The Speaker: I see I am going to have to put the motion first, if the hon. secretary of state will excuse me.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, immediately following the adoption of this Order, the sitting shall be suspended and shall be reconvened for the sole purpose of attending a Royal Assent;

Provided that, immediately upon return from the said Royal Assent, the House shall be adjourned to the next sitting day;

Provided that if the House has not been reconvened for the purpose of attending a Royal Assent by 10 a.m. on Monday, March 27, 1995, it shall, at that time, be reconvened for the sole purpose of being adjourned until 11 a.m. March 27, 1995.

[Translation]

He said: The purpose of this motion is to suspend the sitting of the House while the other place passes this bill and ensure that, by tomorrow, railway operations will have resumed in our country, so that, for instance, the people from the suburbs of Montreal who commute by train can do so tomorrow.

The other day, the Leader of the Opposition congratulated the Minister of Labour on having resolved the conflict in the port of Montreal. But now the port of Montreal is cluttered with containers and, if trains could get rolling as soon as possible, they could be shipped out. This way, factories would get the parts they need and workers could keep working.

That is why, for the last time, we ask the opposition to give consent to suspending the sitting of the House to allow this legislation to be enacted today and railway operations to resume tomorrow. I know that my colleague, the House leader of the opposition wishes to speak, but I hope that after he has done so, the sitting of the House can be suspended to ensure that this legislation be given royal assent before the day is over.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Members opposite have no need to worry about my wish to speak to this motion, Mr. Speaker. I have no intention of beating, or even getting close to, the recent parliamentary record for the longest speech on a motion, which was set by the current Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in the last Parliament when he spoke for three hours on a fisheries bill. Despite the Deputy Prime Minister's invitation, I have no intention of beating this time record, far from it.

Some matters must be clarified before we agree to adjourn.

• (1435)

Last Monday, when the government and the opposition faced off on the rail transportation problem, we had no idea that we would sit until today, Sunday, before solving this serious problem. We were prepared from the first and sincerely believed that it was possible to settle this matter very quickly with a minimum of co-operation.

This past week was certainly not democracy week in Canada's Parliament. In fact, the government set parliamentary rules aside four times in order to pass this bill. This week, they set aside the rights of CN workers as well as the very rule of free collective bargaining in Canada. This was certainly not the most glorious week for the government and the new Minister of Labour.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: This was neither democracy week nor a very good week for the Minister of Labour, who will go down in history as the ultimate trigger-happy minister, who rejected all the recommendations in the conciliator's report, who refused to discuss the matter with the opposition, who refused to keep an open mind in this debate, who refused to co-operate with the people on this side in order to settle the labour dispute.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: During this debate, and particularly at third reading, members opposite referred to previous debates during which the Leader of the Opposition or other members may have held different views. But we are quite comfortable with that. After all, let us not forget that the Prime Minister and leader of this government fought tooth and nail against free trade, leading an extraordinary charge which lasted for months and which was also part of his leadership campaign. Back then, all the members opposite were against free trade, whereas today they extoll the virtues of NAFTA.