

against the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm). I only want that clarified because the Hon. Member for Peterborough is not here at the moment. I would not want the Hon. Member who is speaking now to continue without the Hon. Member being able to hear what might be said. I take it there is no charge against the Hon. Member for Peterborough.

● (1130)

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your intervention on that very important point. Indeed, I was simply raising an observation as to the way business had been conducted in the House. We were informed at the latest moment yesterday that the Hon. Member for Peterborough was unable to be here to introduce and debate his Private Members' Bill. I noticed during the vote that in fact the Hon. Member was in his place at the designated time. There seems to be some inconsistency here, particularly when one considers the proceedings of the House that took place immediately thereafter.

On a point of order, I ask that Your Honour give some consideration to this matter. As the Standing Orders now require, when notice is given the day before, Private Members' Hour is simply eliminated and the business of the day continues. This allowed the Government to bring in its members to call for extended hours and then used that time to eliminate any further debate at the second reading stage of Bill C-23.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Chair has the point of the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis). I see there are other Members rising to speak to this point and I think I should probably call upon the Parliamentary Secretary.

**Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief because we do not want to delay the debate on the opposition motion any longer than members of the Opposition have already delayed it with their petitions.

First, I wish to point out that the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) had the courtesy to advise the Chair and the House that he would be unavailable at 5 p.m. yesterday to move his motion. I know that my colleague was not reflecting upon the Hon. Member's absence from the House at that time. However, it seems to me that he has every right to say that he cannot be here at 5 p.m. and then come in at 6 p.m. or 6.15 p.m. and vote. The point is that he gave notice that he would not be here at 5 p.m. I do not think that he in any way abused that right by being here at 6.15 p.m. to vote.

The second point I wish to make is that the Hon. Member himself was the one who initiated the action which dropped him to the bottom of the list. As the Chair stated: "Accordingly, I am directing the Table to drop that item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence". So the Hon. Member made the decision himself to have his order of business dropped to the bottom of the list.

Having said those things, I want to specifically reject any suggestion that the Government in any way was trying to

manipulate the business of the House or in any way manipulate Private Members' Business. We have made it a very firm practice not to become involved in Private Members' Business. That is an hour in which Private Members bring forward their own pieces of legislation and motions. I reject that argument categorically.

I point out that the complaint seems to be revolving around the extension of hours. I also point out that no member of the Opposition saw fit to participate in the debate after the motion with respect to the extension of hours was agreed to. Obviously, there was no Government participation in the dropping of the motion; the Member decided to do it himself. There was no manipulation. When the motion with respect to the extension of hours was agreed to, members of the Opposition saw the wisdom of our legislation and allowed it to go to committee on division.

I do not think there is really any point of order. We feel that when Private Members' Hour is not proceeded with that the business of the country should go forward. That is simply all we did.

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, the last sentence spoken by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary is subject to some controversy. I do not think and I do not believe that when Private Members' Hour is vacated it should automatically become an hour in which to discuss Government business. I have said that before in the House and I will say it again. Private Members' Hour should and would in my opinion be much better off if kept at that, Private Members' Hour, and not be given back to Government Orders. In fact, I have a motion on the Order Paper today calling for exactly that. I am calling for a change to Standing Order 43 which would give private Members of the House that one-hour period which is set aside four times a week and in which they are allowed to debate their issues.

The question the Parliamentary Secretary raises with a straight face—and God knows I am not accusing him of anything—is somewhat doubtful. The Hon. Member is a gentleman and I believe him when he tells us that the Government has not been manipulative. The Government profits from the fact that it is given the time when a private Member cannot be here to move his motion. In my opinion that is regrettable. It is something which has to be changed. Our present Standing Orders are provisional and will expire at the end of this month. If the Government wishes to extend them into January then it had better come to grips with this important issue.

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I have but a short intervention to make. The Parliamentary Secretary seemed to indicate in his reply that the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) had said that the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) was here to vote at six o'clock or some time thereafter. If Your Honour would take a look at the *Hansard* of yesterday at page 1894 you would see that it indicates that the Hon. Member for Peterborough was