

Private Members' Motions

An hon. Member: Stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Stand at the request of the government. Notice of motion No. 15, in the name of the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. O'Sullivan); shall the motion stand?

An hon. Member: Stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Stand at the request of the government.

Mr. Blais: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I say that I believe there is agreement, through the usual channels, that today we will deal with motion No. 13.

Mr. Paproski: That is agreed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Herbert: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The item just referred to by the parliamentary secretary is the twelfth item on the order paper. I note that the eleven preceding items have been allowed to stand at the request of the government. I note, also, that there is a total of 63 items under private members' notices of motions that have been placed on the order paper since the start of this session.

● (1700)

Of the 11 items that have been allowed to stand, four date back to the start of this session on October 10, 1974, and another five are also dated 1974. The other two are dated January, 1975. As a result of some efforts I made earlier in this session to get some order into this chaos of private member's hour, we were supposed to receive notice of business that was coming before us. Now this reaches us about the middle of the week, on Wednesday or Thursday, by which time we have had two private members' hours.

In order for us to have any idea of what business is going on, I think we should revert to the original procedure when an improper argument, or no argument, is presented as to why an item should be left on the order paper. I can understand it under certain circumstances such as the absence or the illness of an hon. member, or other good reasons. But when items remain on the order paper, as they have, for almost two years, I suggest there is something wrong with our procedures. Could we not have some assurance that the government will explain to us why it is willing to pass over business in this fashion?

While I am on my feet, may I say that I intend to rise tomorrow on the matter of public bills, because so many public bills have been passed over, including three bills of mine, and nobody took the trouble to call me.

Mr. Paproski: Shame on you guys.

Mr. Herbert: Obviously, the procedure is not working satisfactorily and I think there should be an explanation from the government as to why we are following the order in this fashion, so that we can have some idea of what we are doing here during private members' hour.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to delay proceedings on this order of business that has been agreed upon. I should like to indicate to the hon. member that if he has complaints about the way that these matters are being

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dealt with, I wish he would advise me prior to making his comments.

The procedures are dealt with in the usual way. The notices are dealt with in the ordinary sequence. We accommodate as many private members as we possibly can. As the hon. member has pointed out, evidently there are members who cannot be here when a matter is to be disposed of, and therefore the item is stood with the consent of all parties, so that not only hon. members but the departments are made aware of the matters that will be debated.

This is the first complaint I have had relating to any of the matters that have been disposed of during private members' business. I should like to point out to the hon. member that we are now operating under a special House order which permitted the reinstatement of an item in private members' hour, notwithstanding the fact that under the rules the item would have expired as a result of the length of this particular session. At that time there had been no complaints relating to the way in which we were disposing of these items. Neither have I received complaints from hon. members opposite. As was indicated to me by the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart), that is one of the more efficient procedures that we have at present.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Who is he?

Mr. Blais: I have listened to the hon. gentleman. I was not aware that he had been bypassed on any of the matters that he wanted to have debated in the House. If he has a matter that precedes any of the items that have been debated, and he has not been consulted, then surely there is something wrong and I undertake to look into it very seriously. However, I wish to point out to him that we are all private members attempting to dispose of as much business as we possibly can, and we hope we are dealing with these matters with complete fairness.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): May I point out, Mr. Speaker—whatever validity the hon. member for Vaudeuil (Mr. Herbert) may have with respect to his position—that a week ago today this very item was called. It was then 5.30 p.m.—we had taken some time to vote on an aspect of a certain iniquitous matter—and the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) requested that the matter be stood over until the next time and that it retain its position. There could be a nice legal argument as to what position was to be retained, but it was certainly understood that the next time there was private members' hour this motion would have priority and would be called. As I say, the hon. member has an argument with respect to the general matter of private members' business, but it seems to me that today is a special case.

It is not often that I answer for the government and appear to be an advocate for the hon. member for Yukon, but I think we should proceed as indicated.

Mr. Nielsen: Certainly, what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has just said can be found on page 13087 of *Hansard*, which is tantamount to a House order that we would be on this subject today.