

The last point I want to make is important. It shows that what is wrong with this motion in terms of custom, precedent, tradition, vagueness, uncertainty, violation of Beauchesne and all the other things from which it suffers—its conception and in the mind of the government House leader, in the lack of consultation with members of the House, with his colleague House leaders and with the wording as it appears on the Order Paper—is that it so violates the traditions of this House and ought not to be allowed to stand. Common decency demands that it be withdrawn. Given his anxiety to continue the debate, the government House leader should propose something which, while it is questionable in parliamentary practice, is at least within the bounds of decency. It is in that area, that final area, that this motion ought to be struck down by the Chair.

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, I want to participate in this point of order with respect to the admissibility of the motion before us today. As a member who did not have an opportunity to participate in this debate I feel quite strongly about it and want to make sure this point of view is brought forward on behalf of those many other Members of Parliament who did not have that opportunity. This motion purports to curtail and restrict the ability of members of the House of Commons to participate in debate on a very important topic.

The basis on which I enter the debate, after listening to the presentations made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker), who dealt with a wide range of objections, is to bring forward a perspective and an argument which would support the position taken by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton. This motion sets an unusual precedent, one which has extraordinary implications, and one which offends the rules established in the House of Commons during the life of our country.

I would point out to Your Honour that this motion is unique in the parliamentary history of Canada. In our parliamentary history there has never been an occasion when the government, during debate of whatever nature, has taken the course of changing the rules of the House in mid-stream. From my study of our parliamentary precedents, this seems to be the first occasion when a government has taken the Draconian measure that is now being taken, to impose a form of closure, under whatever guise or name, during the course of debate.

As my House leader pointed out, this is not a debate with respect to a minor piece of legislation; it is a debate that affects the fundamental rules of our country; a debate which is of considerable importance; it is an historic debate and I acknowledge that. It is a debate in which you, Madam Speaker, as the first commoner, must take special care to ensure that the rules of the House of Commons which allow members to participate freely, without intimidation or unnecessary exclusion are applied. It is your responsibility, Madam Speaker, to ensure that there is an opportunity for members of this House of Commons to adequately, properly and democratically debate this very important motion.

*Point of Order—Mr. Knowles*

I should like to make one reference in this connection, Madam Speaker. As you are well aware, the rules of the House of Commons are established by the Standing Orders, by the precedents and traditions developed over the course of years, not only in this Parliament but also in the parliament of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland as referred to in Standing Order 1.

You will know that there is no deviation allowed, unless by unanimous consent, in the method of changing the rules of procedure. In other words, it is not possible for me as a member of Parliament to stand in the course of the daily proceedings and gain the floor unless I abide by the rules. I cannot smuggle a particular motion in by standing on a point of order. The examples are many. The rules are there; they are carefully guarded and interpreted by Your Honour, and enforced by the House of Commons.

In light of that background, it is absolutely imperative that you, as Speaker of the House of Commons, look at any motion that comes before you to make sure it is fully and completely in accordance with the tradition or Standing Orders of the House. That almost goes without saying.

If I may be permitted to say so, it is doubly incumbent upon Your Honour to pay special attention to any important debate; that is the nature of politics, that is the nature of Parliament and that is the nature of the democratic system in our country.

Perhaps I can begin my presentation by referring to what I consider the least important aspect of this particular motion, an aspect referred to initially by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre speaking on behalf of the New Democratic Party. We know the position of that party on the matter. It supports the government with respect to the motion. But on the other hand, he has indicated they are opposed to the motion as being a form of closure. The member for Winnipeg North Centre has shared the bed with the government, but he now wants to put in, by virtue of this minor objection, a kind of a bundling board between himself and the government in order to maintain his chastity in respect of the position the party has taken. That is rather difficult to accomplish.

The question of the tabling of speeches is dealt with, as Your Honour will appreciate, in Citation 311 of Beauchesne. Since the full context has not been brought to Your Honour's attention, I shall read it.

*Under no circumstances may a member merely table a speech for printing in Hansard.*

**Mr. Knowles:** I read it all.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** When the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre spoke, he said he heard voices, those of Mackenzie King and other eminent parliamentarians. I appreciate the fact that he hears voices. I did not hear his voice dealing with this in the same way that I shall deal with it. He and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) are roughly the same age. Yesterday the Prime Minister heard the voice of George Drew. This place is becoming a little hard for us younger folk to take, Madam Speaker. I should like to finish reading Citation 311.

**Mr. Collenette:** Filibuster.