

Pollution

Mr. Coates: The second point is that I made a speech in the House a very short while ago in the course of which I mentioned this subject. The President of the Privy Council was in the chamber. He comes from the same province as I do. He knows the situation. He cannot get up and camouflage—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The argument made by the hon. member at this time is not entirely relevant to the point of order raised by the President of the Privy Council. The President of the Privy Council has in substance reiterated the point that the Chair made a moment ago.

I appreciate the difficulty in connection with Standing Order 43. Hon. members have been using Standing Order 43 more and more since the House adopted a change in our rules to eliminate difficulties that had resulted from an abuse of the use of Standing Order 26. The Committee on Procedure and Organization, in its wisdom, revised rule 26, and there are some hon. members who feel that perhaps it is now operating a little more efficiently and to the greater satisfaction of hon. members, though this opinion may not be held universally by hon. members.

What we are obviously doing now is using Standing Order 43 to replace Standing Order 26, and in my view Standing Order 43 was never intended as a substitute for Standing Order 26. In my view Standing Order 43 should be interpreted by the Chair as strictly as possible. When hon. members make a motion under Standing Order 43 I have invited them to limit their presentation to the House to the urgency of the matter and not to develop or present a substantive argument. I am satisfied that in most instances this prescription has been respected by hon. members. We have had a considerable number of motions under Standing Order 43 which have been limited, brief, to the point, and non-partisan as the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North suggested a moment ago. They have been motions that have been limited entirely to indicating the urgency of the matter raised in the motion.

In my view there is nothing substantially wrong with the motion moved by the hon. member. In the difficult situation that has been raised by the point of order made by the President of the Privy Council, only two things are possible. First, the House can change the Standing Order. The Standing Order is in the book and it is open to hon. members to use it, and this is what they have been doing. If the majority of the House is of the opinion that the Standing Order should be amended, then it is open to hon. members to change it, either by proposing a motion to the House or by having the matter considered by the Committee on Procedure and Organization, with that committee reporting back on the advisability of making a change in the rule which could then be considered and possibly adopted by the House. The only other alternative is to rely upon the Chair to use its discretion in deciding when, in the opinion of the Chair, the presentation of the motion has gone beyond the limits prescribed by Standing Order 43. This is what I have tried

[Mr. Coates.]

to do and what I shall continue to do. I might say again that in this particular instance I find nothing substantially or essentially wrong with the motion proposed by the hon. member.

As a parting word, may I add that the concurrence prescribed by Standing Order 43 is not the concurrence of the government but the concurrence of the House. Even if the whole government—the cabinet—were in favour of a motion proposed by any hon. member, it would be sufficient if one member of any party, even a member from the ranks of the hon. member who proposed the motion, to oppose the putting of the motion: it would then not be put. We should interpret this Standing Order in the way it should be interpreted, which is in the way it is written, namely, that it requires unanimous consent, that is, the consent of every member of the House. I do not think the government should want to take on its shoulders the responsibility of refusing a motion. If a motion is refused, it is not refused by the government but by the House, as expressed by the voice of but one single member who has the right to refuse his consent to the putting of the motion.

● (11:30 a.m.)

I again want to tell hon. members that I am fully aware of the difficulties which have arisen in respect of the interpretation of the use of Standing Order 43. Until such time as it is amended by the House I will do my best to satisfy hon. members on both sides, including the President of the Privy Council, and to ensure that it is not abused or used for presenting substantive arguments and that the presentations of hon. members are limited to an indication of the urgency of the matter.

Hon. members have heard the motion and I must inquire whether there is unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent so the motion cannot be put.

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WAYS AND MEANS

DESIGNATION OF ORDER OF THE DAY TO DEBATE WAYS AND MEANS MOTIONS

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 60(2), I request the designation of an order for consideration on Tuesday next of the ways and means motions tabled by the Minister of Finance on December 3, 1970.