

*Committee Procedure*

such a compelling manner I intend to be very brief. I would point out to Your Honour that I raised a similar point of order with respect to the Standing Committee on Agriculture sitting at the same time as agricultural matters were being discussed in the House of Commons in the course of the present session.

If the Committee on Agriculture were sitting while a bill affecting justice and legal affairs was being considered in this Chamber, that would be one thing; we would have to determine our priorities in terms of the topics under consideration. But here we find one part of the peace and security package being considered in two different forums at the same time, and affecting people who are very closely involved in each of these debates. If the government House leader is serious he will review this matter and make other arrangements. It would not necessarily mean the suspension of the sittings of the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. Surely some provision could be made for the committee to sit at times when the House is not debating the capital punishment bill.

There is another matter I should like to bring to the attention of the government House leader. Would it not be possible to cut down the number of sittings which members of the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs presently face? Members of that committee who, it must be remembered, have other duties as well, face an extremely arduous task on the basis of the present program of six sittings a week, and this for an indefinite period.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that as the spokesman for the House of Commons you have the right, as guardian of the rights and privileges of our members, to rule that there can be no debate on capital punishment legislation at times when the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs is sitting to consider the other part of what has been described as a legislative package. I hope favourable consideration will be given to this point, not only by Your Honour but by the government House leader who has now come back from a holiday.

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Beaudoin:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make myself the spokesman for our party on a point of order so well put forward by the official opposition. I think this discussion on Bill C-83, which comes from the same department as Bill C-84, is held at the same time as the House of Commons examines Bill C-84. Now, I think both bills should not be discussed together, one in the standing committee and the other in the House. First—

**Mr. Blais:** Do you want to sit until July?

**Some hon. Members:** No, until August.

**Mr. Beaudoin:** Until August, that is it. We know we will adjourn in August because there are only 20-odd days left for government business: there are six days for discussing the budget and the rest is allotted to the opposition. Therefore this means we know in advance that we cannot finish the study of current business for June 30; it would be a mistake if one thought so.

Second, we are here to make a serious consideration of the legislation. I think the point of order raised by the

official opposition is in order, and perhaps more for our party than for the Progressive Conservatives because we are only 11 in the House of Commons and we must be everywhere at the same time. With due respect, I suggest that this be taken into consideration, in view of the fact that we have to be at both places at the same time to discuss almost the same issues. I would also like to make one small remark at this time: the other committees sitting for the consideration of estimates or other issues could very well sit, for it is not at all the same thing. But as Bill C-83 and Bill C-84 come from the same department, they should not be studied at the same time.

[*English*]

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am rather taken aback by the remarks of the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) because I have been discussing the business of the House with representatives of all parties.

**Mr. Woolliams:** But nobody ever agreed to this kind of nonsense.

**Mr. Sharp:** There was no reaction like this, Mr. Speaker, though I can understand there are difficulties. May I point out to the House that debate on Bill C-84 has only just got under way; it began on Monday of this week.

**Mr. Woolliams:** You have had six meetings about this.

**Mr. Sharp:** There could not have been any substantial conflict on this matter because we have just begun debate on Bill C-84, which I recall was introduced by my colleague on Monday. So it could only have been on Monday and possibly today that a conflict might arise.

It is very difficult to know how to schedule the business of the House toward the end of a session of this kind. I can assure hon. members that as House leader I shall try to do it in a way that will facilitate debate. As I understand it, the committee dealing with Bill C-83 is very anxious that it should meet as seldom as possible while the House is in session, and indeed is trying to give priority to morning sittings, and to make them long so as to minimize the possibility of conflict.

I hesitate to say this to the hon. gentleman, but since we have only just begun to debate Bill C-84, his outburst at this time really seems to be quite unjustified. I do intend to meet with the House leaders, as they know, and I hope we can discuss this subject. I believe that this House would like to proceed to deal with both these measures as expeditiously as possible, with as free a discussion as possible, and that is also our view.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The question has been raised and contributed to by quite a number of members. I have attempted to give an opportunity to each party at least to be represented in putting forward a view. I see there are one or two other members who want to contribute to the point, but some who wanted to contribute have had the opportunity.

I am sure all hon. members realize at once two or three things. First of all, the grievance or concern that has been expressed is not new to this House. It has been raised many, many times in the past, though I must say not very frequently in this particular parliament but rather in pre-