

Government Orders

so convinced of its case, why is it so scared to have parliamentary debate in this open forum?

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the opposition House leader said—and I know there are some games played here—that with 73 amendments, how in all sense of parliamentary tradition can they be discussed fully. We are not England where we know the longest debate was for two days on the European Common Market. In this country we are spread out and we need time to debate in this forum, if it means anything, to find out if people from coast to coast still believe in any of the issues we debate.

Debate cannot be choked off after three days between a September day when we were involved in the Constitution and then coming back here in the post-constitution hangover that the member for High River still has. There were two days of debate on November 16 and 17. Does the House think this is long enough for an honest debate on something that affects Canadians from coast to coast? Every Canadian takes drugs and patent medicine and pharmaceutical drugs and it is fundamentally important we examine this thoroughly. If there were ever a reason to support the unusual and unique motion of the member for Kamloops, if this Parliament is to mean anything, then this is the time for you, Mr. Speaker, a person equal among all of us, to exercise your discretion in favour of Canadians, not just in the technical interpretation of rules.

• (1600)

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, although, in principle, it goes without saying that the Bloc Québécois is against limiting debate. However, we are somewhat surprised to hear the NDP complain indignantly about time allocation today, after having connived with the Liberal Party during the referendum debate to limit debate in order to prevent us from speaking out. When fighting for principles, you cannot act the martyr when, just a few months earlier, the very same principles were applied in reverse to limit debate.

In that sense, we can understand that the government would want to limit debate on this bill so vital to the Montreal area, as the NDP, by its attitude both in

committee and in this House, does not seem to want the debate to progress toward a conclusion and a vote. Without agreeing with the principle of time allocation, again we are surprised, considering the Liberals and the NDP had supported these very principles to limit us at the time of the referendum.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I know that the House would want me to respond to the hon. member for Kamloops and the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond and the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants who have raised an issue here which is, to put it simply, that it is inappropriate for the government to move now for time allocation. Some comments that I have made in the past have been quoted and I have listened very carefully to what I once said.

The difficulty it seems to me that those proponents of the motion are in is that, as the hon. House leader points out, there have been changes in the rules and the government has followed exactly the course it must follow under the present rules which govern us.

There has been some suggestion that when the present rules were past it was without the full consent of all the members in the House and that may well have been the case. The Speaker's area of manoeuvre in acting on discretion is always somewhat circumscribed and in this case it clearly is very much constrained.

I have to advise the House that in my view the government has followed exactly what the rules of the House are. As a consequence, while I have listened with great interest and some sympathy to the points made by members of the opposition, nonetheless I must rule that the matter can go forward.

The House has heard the terms of the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.