

Honour. On occasion the motion was even accepted by the House. It does not make the procedure any better though.

One of the problems, is the question of the preamble. So often the preamble contains a lot of material which is objectionable in itself and puts us in the position, in effect, of saying no to the preamble rather than to the motion itself. Sometimes there is not much relationship between the preamble and the motion. This sometimes puts Your Honour in the difficult position of having to rule on whether the motion would be in order. This may more often be the case in the future than it has been up to this time. In my opinion Your Honour has up to this time tended to accept almost all motions. You did not like one of mine a week or so ago, but nevertheless I think there is a tendency to accept motions on the basis that it is up to the House to decide if they may be put.

If we are to be very rigid about these things in future, we are obviously going to engage in lengthy discussion as to the acceptability of a motion and Your Honour will be called upon to make some difficult decisions. I prefer the practice we have been following whereby the House is called upon to make that decision to an extent. For example, quoting from your response to one of my motions, Your Honour said that there was some question as to whether the motion was a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. I am not disputing that opinion; all I am saying is that it is an opinion and therefore we could get into frequent argument as to whether a matter is of urgent and pressing necessity or not.

I raise this point because it is not very often that members, when presenting a 43, do discuss first of all just whether it is urgent or whether it is pressing. I took the trouble on the day I mentioned to give some of my reasons, but I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I could have gone on at considerable length explaining why the matter was urgent and pressing and trying to convince you that the motion should be regarded as acceptable. I make this point because I do not believe that any of us would wish to put Your Honour in the position of having to make daily decisions, first of all on the basis of whether a matter is urgent and pressing and whether the motion is acceptable. In other words, we could conceivably be facing procedural debates on every 43 brought forward. I am of the opinion that it is probably easier to say no to every 43 automatically and get rid of the problem that way.

It is true, and I admit to it readily, that we are using Standing Order 43 to make a point. I went fishing a week or so ago and I caught a big fish, because the very next day the hon. member for Kingston and The Islands responded, but rather strangely. Her criticism appeared in the preamble to the motion rather than in the motion itself. I found it quite effective in that even though a motion had been proposed—certainly not put because it was allowed to stand for this particular discussion—there was a response, a response, quite frankly, that I was looking for and it came. Even the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) later that day—at three o'clock—spoke of the motion as being a statement of devastating consequences.

Point of Order—Mr. MacEachen

This brings me to another point, which is that Standing Order 43 does not refer to importance. If we want to take this to an absurd degree, there are many matters in our own individual ridings which are of urgent and pressing necessity on a daily basis but are certainly not particularly important and may not be matters properly for discussion in this House. I think we should consider carefully whether we want to bring all these small details into the House for discussion.

There is only one more comment I wish to make here and that concerns the remarks of the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath). He talked about cracking down on the abuse. He said that a motion should be able to stand on its own. We can readily achieve that end by cutting out the preamble completely. Possibly we could reach a ready agreement among ourselves that motions from now on should be presented "neat", that is to say, with no preamble to discuss urgent and pressing necessity, no preamble to set up the motion. The motion should stand on its own and be one which is acceptable to the Chair. That would get rid of the lengthy preamble which, in the minds of many, is the most objectionable feature of motions under Standing Order 43 at the present time.

The hon. member also said that Standing Order 43 could pre-empt the other rules of the House—he was quoting Standing Order 15(4). Whatever your ruling on this, sir, if you agreed with the hon. member for St. John's East it could be of serious consequence.

Of course, one way of getting out of the difficulty automatically would be to make sure that every 43 received a "No". From my own point of view, I believe the problem has arisen not so much because of the multitude of motions, sometimes interesting, sometimes humorous, sometimes inconsequential, as from the attempt more recently to put into such motions matters of serious consequence to the country, to the government and even to the opposition from its point of view. This got everyone excited about the consequences of leaving unanswered a question of grave national concern.

I do not know how we can get around this difficulty. Frankly, at the present time, since nothing has been suggested and we are having a glorified and rather lengthy debate, it seems to me that, whatever Your Honour may have to say in the future between approximately 2.05 and 2.15, some of us will continue to rise and propose motions under Standing Order 43.

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I shall attempt to be brief. As a backbencher, Standing Order 43 is the vehicle I try to use when I have to put forward matters of urgent and pressing necessity. I try to keep my motions as clear, precise and to the point as possible.

● (2102)

I come from an area where people do not receive daily newspapers. Crisis situations are brought on by government departments and Crown corporations, and I can cite a couple of them. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was being