

In an effort to ensure that Bill C-176 did not suffer the same fate as the other bills on this subject, the hon. member for Fundy-Royal and the hon. member for St. Paul's undertook to get the approval of our caucus to a possible rewording of a clause of the bill. These members felt a sense of obligation to try to help the survival and eventual passage of the bill. They approached this as part of a package of legislation. They approached it in a spirit of consideration involving passage of the bill. To date the government has not lived up to this undertaking. The government has given no undertaking to proceed with the passage of this bill. What is so sacred about the House rising on Saturday, or next Monday or Tuesday, compared with the importance of these considerations?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: We strongly prefer the bill as it was adopted and passed by this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: But the minister seeks a compromise with a view to its passage. He got one on the basis of proceeding with the passage of the bill, but he has not lived up to it and neither have his colleagues. I ask the minister to tell the House at this time, before I conclude my remarks, whether if we agree to support the amendment that he has put forward the government will give us the assurance that it will stay here until the bill is passed.

The minister is remarkably silent, Mr. Speaker. It is one thing to ask us to compromise and depart from a position in which we believe for the purpose of getting through in imperfect condition a bill that we consider a vast improvement over the existing situation. But it is something else, sir, to ask us to give such a commitment without giving us in return the assurance that such a compromise on our part will mean the adoption of the bill.

The ball is clearly in the government's court. It is not really a question of the views of the Senate; the trouble is that the government will not accept the view of this House as already adopted. The Minister of Justice is not prepared to adopt the view that this House has already expressed through a formal vote. If the minister wants to talk about a compromise in order to get the bill passed, let him give us the assurance that the bill will in fact be kept before the House until it is passed.

Mr. Hees: Come on, on your feet.

Mr. Fairweather: He does not dare get up.

Mr. Lang: What we thought was an agreement is now a broken word, apparently.

Mr. Stanfield: I suggest the minister had better keep his seat and not expose himself any more than he has. However, I do want to say this, and I shall soon conclude, Mr. Speaker. This House has already passed this bill. If the government will not accept the bill as passed, it has the responsibility to put forward a measure commanding majority support and staying here until the House either reconfirms the bill as it was passed previously or passes the bill with changes in it. That is the duty of this govern-

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ment, particularly since the House has already taken a position on this bill.

● (1530)

You can talk about how a minority parliament works, but let us see it work.

Mr. Hees: It works on the welch principle.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: You just want to go home, Steve.

Mr. Paproski: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to rise on a point of order, but an hon. gentleman over there says that I want to go home. I did not say I wanted to go home.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: We will sic Stanley after you.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, hon. members over there talk about how they can make a minority parliament work, but let us see it work.

Mr. Lang: And you talk about word of honour.

Mr. Stanfield: You are talking about word of honour?

Mr. Lang: May I ask the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) a question?

Mr. Stanfield: Certainly, you can ask me a question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Is the minister rising on a point of order? The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor and the minister cannot rise unless he claims the floor on a point of order or on a question of privilege.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I asked whether the Leader of the Opposition would permit me to ask a question and I thought he indicated his willingness to answer.

Mr. Hees: Certainly. Get on your feet and let us have a commitment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor and the minister has already spoken. If he wishes to eventually reply in the course of the debate he will be recognized for that purpose. Questions by the minister can be asked when he has the floor, otherwise they are rhetorical.

An hon. Member: All talk without much action.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the minister wants to rise to ask a question and there is agreement, that is a different matter.

Mr. Bell: He is always trying to learn.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the Leader of the Opposition whether, in view of the words he has just