

Point of Order—Mr. Allmand

followed by the Government and this Parliament, we think it will make an enormous difference.

I believe Members will also be pleased with the notion of eligibility being determined on the basis of 400 hours of work. While this seems simple at first blush, this refers to the resource nature of this country, in the oil industry, fishing, forestry and many other sectors of the Canadian economy in which people work large numbers of hours in a week. Previously, unemployment insurance did not acknowledge the reality that people may work 100 or 120 hours in a week rather than the normal 40 hours a week associated with the manufacturing industry. We are pleased to be able to assert a recommendation that would acknowledge the resource sector and its differential work patterns.

There are many other recommendations, including major reorganization, but I think those three thrusts represent significant departures. I hope they will find favour with the Government and the Parliament of Canada.

[Translation]

PRESENTATION OF THE THIRD REPORT OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the third report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Business, in both official languages.

[Editor's Note: For above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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● (1110)

[English]

POINT OF ORDER

PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE REPORT—EQUAL TIME SOUGHT
FOR OPPOSITION CRITICS' RESPONSE

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, when my colleague, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration was tabling the report of the standing committee with respect to unemployment insurance, a report which I, for the greater part, support, he made some lengthy comments. It seems to me that while I support much of what he said, I think it is appropriate that when one makes such a lengthy statement in tabling a report, the opposition critics should have similar time to comment as well.

If I understand correctly, the usual rule is that you simply table the report. I think it is a good thing that the Chairman is able to make the kind of comments he made. However, I also believe that if he does make that kind of comment, which is similar to comments made when a Minister makes a statement

on Motions, opposition critics should have a similar short period of time to make comments as well.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. In the same vein, I applaud much of what our Chairman has said. I would think it is a good idea if we had a few minutes to highlight, from our perspective, the work which was done in this particular committee with this particular report. I think it does signal a new mood in committees. We have come up with a report which has the support of all Parties in this House. In fact, only one Member from the government side—and it is in the report—departed from the rest of his colleagues with respect to the issue of pension income as earned income. I think there was only that one departure. I would ask Your Honour to consider giving us an opportunity to respond briefly.

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would not for a moment want to be seen to be prohibiting freedom of expression in the House. However, I think we are dealing here with the tabling of a document. It has been customary in previous Parliaments, and this Parliament, to allow for certain non-partisan remarks to be made by the individual in his or her capacity as chairperson of that committee. I think that is appropriate and is well understood.

I would suggest to the Chair that the Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure is presently reviewing the Standing Orders. It seems to me that if a new practice is to be created, and I am not for a minute suggesting it should or should not be created, the format for dealing with a change in our procedures should be through changes to the Standing Orders rather than by a point of order on the floor of the House.

For that reason, I think my colleagues have had their opportunity to comment and in future we should simply try to confine the remarks to those pertinent to the tabling of the reports, and any comments a Member may want to make should be made during Question Period or outside the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to comment. First, I am happy to see that the annualization principle that had detrimental effects for fishermen of the Atlantic provinces has been unanimously rejected. I am happy to see Conservative Members oppose the Government's decision to take pension income into account to reduce unemployment benefits. I am also very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that Members of the House, be they Liberal, Conservative or New Democrat, worked in a very constructive way.

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.