

would be surprising if the Chair had made a ruling without having read the text of the agreement.

Mr. Lapierre: He was not the one occupying the Chair at the time.

[*English*]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. It was my understanding of the agreement which was made with my colleague across the way—and I also discussed it with the critic for the NDP—that it would go to committee on a voice vote but there would not be a recorded division. That was the whole reason for the discussion.

I am sure that I speak for the Progressive Conservatives in the House when I say that we are prepared to have the question of designating a Senior Citizens' Day considered by a Standing Committee. We think that that is very worth while, and we would be prepared to have that happen. However, if the members of the Liberal Party who are here—and I specifically say members of the Liberal Party who are here—do not want to have that very important matter discussed by the Standing Committee, I am prepared to hear their nays.

Mr. Berger: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I was party to the agreement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) on a point of order.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I was one of the people consulted in this regard, and I want to give you the benefit of what I recall as having been the consultation. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader spoke with me and asked whether I would be agreeable to an arrangement in the House which would allow that at 6.41, or when the debate completed if it were prior to 6.41, this matter could be referred to a committee for further study, and that that would take place without a recorded vote. That is what I was asked to agree to, and I agreed to that.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans). Indeed the agreement, as I understood it, differs from what I just heard from the Deputy Government House Leader. My understanding of Private Members' Hour is very much the same as that which all Hon. Members are used to working under, and that is that if a vote was indeed put, it would not be a registered vote. "If" is the big word I must use. I insist that you read the order, Mr. Speaker, unless I misunderstood the situation. I have no personal objection to this motion going to a committee, and I said so to the Hon. Member. However, I cannot, nor can the Government or anyone else take it upon ourselves to make deals as to how the private Members in the House operate within their own hour.

Adjournment Debate

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Private Members' Hour has now expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 46 deemed to have been moved.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS—TASK FORCE ON CHEMICAL ACCIDENTS

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, just over one year ago on December 3, 1984, the world experienced the most disastrous chemical spill that had ever occurred, in Bhopal, India. Officially something like 1,757 people were killed at that time as a result of a leak of poison gas from a chemical plant owned and operated by Union Carbide in Bhopal, India. It is likely, however, that there were many more than 1,757 people killed. It has been estimated that that figure may have gone as high as about 2,500. It is also estimated that there were likely something in the neighbourhood of 17,000 people injured in that chemical spill, and perhaps even as many as 300,000 people who will be affected either directly and immediately or indirectly and at some later stage in their lives, or perhaps even in the lives of those yet to be born. It has been suggested that there could be a great many side effects like birth defects, miscarriages and lung, eye, liver, kidney, brain and nervous system problems resulting from all of this. As well, a substantial number of lawsuits have been launched in India against Union Carbide over the chemical spill.

Why did all this happen? How is it possible that it could have happened? It has been suggested that there are at least three reasons for it. One is that a town of some 17,000 people was built cheek to jowl with the chemical factory. Another is that the technology at the factory was outdated and outmoded. A third is that the warning system in the factory was not up to modern standards. Whatever the cause, it did happen. We in Canada do not want to see it happen here.

Many people have suggested that it could not happen here and that this sort of thing would be impossible in our own country. However, at the same time we know that we have already experienced problems with chemical spills here in Canada. We know, for instance, of the Mississauga train derailment. Some 250,000 people had to evacuate their homes