

Privilege

say when it might be, we used the only vehicle available. Otherwise we would have been faced with another waste of time and money for the public.

Mr. Barrett: You have other means.

Mr. Andre: There is that former premier over there barking about decorum and how to operate in this House. He should tell; I think you should get your pillow and blanket and have another nap.

Mr. Barrett: That's fine. You should read the rules.

Mr. Andre: The question implied was that somehow between Friday at five o'clock and this time today, because the motion is not there on the Order Paper, something terrible has happened. Somehow people are not getting paid or what have you. I would remind the House of one precedent when the Liberal government of the day introduced a Throne Speech on October 23, 1969 and did not put the business of supply on the Order Paper until nine sitting days later, so for nine sitting days the business of supply was not on the Order Paper.

I do not recall what horrible things happened during that period, but given that there will not be even one sitting day, provided of course we get to motions this day—and if we do not then there will be one sitting day, but so what—nothing will have happened. In reality the citations of Beauchesne and the citations from Bourinot that were raised clearly point out that all that needs to happen is a restoration of the motion.

• (1600)

We have the previous precedent where a Liberal government operated for nine sitting days without such a motion on the paper. What happened on Friday was that a four hour opposition day for the Liberal party really happened. They got all of the time they would have had on a normal day without the shenanigans that went on. Given all of that, I see no reason why in fact we cannot proceed in an orderly, expeditious way with the rest of the business this day. Hopefully in future we can decide matters of House business in a more civilized, mature manner, rather than this kind of ongoing guerrilla warfare, which benefits nobody I might add.

Mr. Speaker: I will give some indication of how I want to proceed.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, I think, has a point to make. I think the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier referred to his desire to raise on one aspect of the argument. I will hear him shortly.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Your Honour, the two issues I wanted to deal with are specifically the question of attendance in the House on Friday afternoon and, second, the issue of whether or not the motion that the government House leader indicates he would like to propose, that is to revive the business of supply on the Order Paper, is debatable.

If I could deal with the first. I think I have cited to Your Honour previously the relevant provisions in Bourinot dealing with the business of supply and its importance in dealing with the business of the House of Commons. I quote again from the fourth edition, page 415:

One of the principal purposes of the House of Commons is the consideration and criticism of the estimates and the taxes required to meet the public expenditures and the committees of supply and ways and means are the parliamentary machinery through which the house chiefly exercises these political and constitutional functions.

As I have indicated, although the words have changed and we no longer have a committee of supply, nevertheless the business of supply as established under Standing Order 81(1) is one of the principal businesses of the House of Commons of Canada, and that is still the case.

What we have here is a situation where the government, having commenced the business of supply this session, on April 3 as indicated in the speech by my friend from Ottawa—Vanier, has now lost the business of supply. It has fumbled the ball on the principal item of government business. It all amounts to an absolute scandal and, frankly, I suggest an abuse of the process of this House.

I want to turn to the situation that existed on Friday afternoon. I know that Your Honour will be aware, no doubt, that frequently in the course of this session and indeed throughout this Parliament, I have stood on questions of privilege or points of order to point out the fact that during debate on government business, members of the government are absent in their entirety from this House.