

Government Orders

among party Whips and party House Leaders. It is also, I think, incumbent upon all members of the House to realize that consent is not found always just by the three House Leaders. The hon. member for Beaver River is a member of this House and when consent is being sought in the normal circumstances the hon. member should also be consulted.

I do want to deal with one thing here because hon. members no doubt might be concerned and so might the public. I am looking at the Commons debate for yesterday and I should say that I was in the chair during most of that debate. I had to leave at the latter part of it for other duties on behalf of all of the members of the House. But in any event, the Speaker who was in the chair was in this position. The debate ended and except for one member—and I will come to that, and I may have to deal with it at another time—who the Speaker did not recognize because he was not properly dressed, there were no other members rising. The Speaker said: "Is the House ready for the question?" There was no vote. It was a unanimous reaction from the House and the debate was closed.

The Hon. Minister of Justice has said that things happen in this place sometimes very suddenly, and they do. I would urge all hon. members that when discussions take place to try to keep in mind that if what seems to be certainties are changed, hon. members will have to keep that in mind. At the same time, as much as is possible, let us try to remember that if understandings are reached or apparently reached and then events change, it can lead to disappointment and sometimes complaint.

I thank the hon. member for raising the matter. I thank the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan. I must also keep in mind what the Hon. Minister for Justice said. This House can act sometimes very quickly if there is a consensus to do so. That is what happened yesterday. I regret, as I am sure other colleagues in the House do, that if there were members who wanted to be in a debate later on and now find that because of what the House did by unanimous act they are precluded, that is regrettable. But, again, the House does sometimes move very quickly, especially when there is unanimity in the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

GENEVA CONVENTIONS ACT**MEASURE TO AMEND**

Hon. Doug Lewis (for the Secretary of State for External Affairs) moved that Bill C-25, an act to amend the Geneva Convention Act, the National Defence Act and the Trade-marks Act, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee be concurred in.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Lewis (for the Secretary of State for External Affairs) moved that the Bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of our party to address a few remarks on Bill C-25 before it receives final approval by the House.

Bill C-25 is an act which will amend technically the Geneva Conventions Act, the National Defence Act and the Trade-marks Act. But the effect of the act is to bring the statutes of Canada into conformity with the protocol signed by the Government of Canada as part of the Geneva Convention process.

In 1977 in Geneva, two protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions were achieved. This bill seeks to ratify the two protocols.

Canadians will be familiar in general terms with the Geneva Conventions. These conventions provide a framework in international law for the conduct of affairs between nations, particularly in time of armed conflict. It is a development and codification of humanitarian rules and principles and rules of conduct in war.

• (1030)

I suppose many Canadians would appreciate that in some sense there is a contradiction in terms. The idea of humanitarian rules applying in war would seem to jar the ear. Yet, throughout history states have developed ways of dealing with the atrocities and excesses that occur in war. In a sense until recently the human family has understood that war sometimes occurs and there needs to be constraints and rules even in the conduct of armed conflict.