

*Business of the House*

of what may ultimately be the final report of the Halifax Relief Commission.

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**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

## REPORT STAGE AND THIRD READING OF BILL C-84

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to suggest a change in the notice of motion appearing on today's order paper at page VII in my name. There seems to be a typographical error in it which changes the meaning of the proposed motion. That it is an error is confirmed by a reading of the French version which appears on the opposite side of the page, where "et" appears.

The motion as it is now on the order paper reads, in part:

That any recorded division requested during the consideration of the report stage of the third reading stage of Bill C-84—

Obviously, one should read "or" instead of "of". If that is acceptable, I should like to see if there is unanimous consent to proceed with this motion as it would be amended today. When I put it down on the order paper yesterday, I did not know that we would reach the report stage of Bill C-84 today. That was a subsequent decision of the House. I think it would be desirable, if the House is ready to proceed today, to accept this order so that there is some certainty about the taking of votes both at the report stage and at third reading.

● (1510)

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Agreed.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Agreed.

**Mr. Beaudoin:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question, therefore, is: Mr. Sharp, seconded by Mr. Allmand, moves:

That any recorded division requested during the consideration of the report stage and the third reading stage—

**Some hon. Members:** "Or."

**Mr. Speaker:** The text I have here reads "and". However, it is agreed that it should be "or". Mr. Sharp, seconded by Mr. Allmand, moves:

That any recorded division requested during the consideration of the report stage or the third reading stage of Bill C-84, an act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to the punishment for murder and other serious offences, shall be held at a time to be fixed by the House leaders, provided that that time shall be not more than one week after the request for the division.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Mr. Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, I would like it to be clear with regard to amendments at the report stage. Is the minister talking about five days for amendments, or will these be voted upon as they come up for approval?

**Mr. Speaker:** The motion has been introduced for debate. The hon. member has raised a question. I would assume, by way of answer, that the deferred divisions will likely be dealt with in the usual course with respect to the report stage motions.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

**Mr. Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I will not take up too much time of the House, but it seems that this strips away the whole façade of a free vote on the capital punishment matter. Here we have a motion introduced by the House leader on behalf of the government—

**Mr. Sharp:** On behalf of all parties.

**Mr. Lawrence:** —in respect of a matter that is supposed to be a free vote according to the free will and conscience of individual members. In other words, there is not supposed to be any party discipline. There are not to be any whips on, or any such matter in relation to this bill. I can certainly see an informal arrangement being worked out for the better dealing of the matter in respect of a formal vote on third reading. However, I must request a far more detailed reason in respect of the amendments which may or may not be found in order with regard to the report stage of the matter.

I feel that on a matter that is supposed to be absolutely free of party discipline, and free of party whips, this is a wrong move. The onus should be on the government House leader to indicate in a far more complete way than he usually reports to the House on a procedure such as this. For example, all these matters have to be voted on in respect of the report stage before we can get into third reading.

**Mr. Blais:** Of course.

**Mr. Lawrence:** All right. However, that may unduly delay the rising of the House for the summer recess. Hon. members should think about that. I can see an informal arrangement being worked out for the third reading vote. However, it is a backward step, on an issue as touchy as this, to begin having the party whips or party leaders, no matter what their party, invoking a little bit of discipline in respect of the votes at report stage. Quite frankly, I would like a full explanation before we vote on this motion.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, it was not my understanding that this was a government motion. I thought it came out of discussions that had taken place among the House leaders and that its purpose was simply to make the necessary provision so that neither side would be caught with a snap vote.

Whatever our views may be on Bill C-84, I think we all agree that what we did on second reading was a good idea, namely, that we designate when the vote will take place so that both sides can make sure their supporters are here. The only difference between the proposal in this motion and the proposal we had previously is that the previous one related to only one vote, namely, second reading, but this relates to the votes at the report stage and at third reading.

In response to the point raised by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, may I point out that under Standing Order 75(11) it is already in the power of the Speaker to defer any or all recorded votes on report stage amendments. I realize there are now 46 amendments. If they are all allowed, that will accumulate a rather massive number of votes. However, I suspect there will not be 46 recorded votes. Let us say there will be three, four, five, or