

National Defence Act Amendment

and *Proceedings* for March 20, 1967, we find this recommendation:

That Standing Order 15(4) be consequentially amended on a provisional basis to read as follows:

15(4) On any Monday, Tuesday or Thursday, notwithstanding the provisions of section 3 of this Standing Order, the consideration of private members' business shall be suspended when an order for resuming the address debate or the budget debate, an order for a motion 'That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair' for the House to go into committee of supply, or an order to go into committee of the whole on a money resolution, pursuant to standing order 61A, is set down as the first item of government business in any such sitting.

I hope no one will accuse me of revealing what has gone on in the special committee on procedure if I say that in presenting this proposal we were not trying to present anything new; we were merely trying to put in one place the various orders relating to the suspension of the private members hour. I submit that this also is on the side of the position taken by the two members of the Conservative party who have spoken.

The statement made by the chairman of the committee of the whole house to the effect that the phrase about third reading in standing order 15A should be treated parenthetically also carries weight. The phrase at the end of that section, "such an order", does seem capable of being applied to the whole of that section of the standing order. We all sympathized with the chairman when he admitted that he was confused. I do not think he needed to apologize for that. I think the wording of this standing order leaves a good deal to be desired.

There are times when we call upon Your Honour to overrule a ruling made by the chairman of a committee of the whole house. You have demonstrated your impartiality and the chairman has demonstrated his largeness of soul by the fact that on one occasion this did happen and a chairman's decision was overruled. Obviously this should not happen very often. I wonder whether in these circumstances—because, after all, there is not much time left either for a private members hour or for the discussion of the defence bill,—whether it would not be better for Your Honour to rule that the special committee on procedure should redraft the whole of this standing order. It seems to me there is nothing to be gained by ruling either way at this time.

There are arguments on both sides but if one looks at the precise wording before us there is a great deal to be said for the position taken by the hon. member for Winnipeg

[Mr. Knowles.]

South Centre and the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. In any case I offer the suggestion that Your Honour reserve your decision until the special committee on procedure has had a proper chance to look at this matter more thoroughly.

Mr. L. M. Brand (Saskatoon): There are just one or two other points which I should like to bring to Your Honour's attention in view of the ruling made by the chairman of committees that private members hour should have preference over all other business until the time of adjournment.

I would refer Your Honour to page 2 of today's *Routine Proceedings* where the order of business for Friday is stated as follows: oral questions, government orders, questions, public bills and private bills. Today we have already considered questions, oral questions and government orders. So we have already carried on some of the order of business, and it would seem to me that if it is the ruling of the Chair that private members hour should not take precedence, then immediately upon our deliberations beginning this afternoon we should have gone on to the consideration of this particular bill in committee of the whole.

Since we have not done so, it would appear to me we should continue normally in accordance with the provisions of the standing order which is in effect, and consider that we should have proceeded at five o'clock to consideration of private members business.

● (5:50 p.m.)

I would point out, in view of the fact that Your Honour may decide to uphold the ruling of the chairman of committees, that we have already spent five hours on the consideration, according to this, and therefore suggest there is valid reason for not carrying it on into private members hour at five o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: I thank hon. members for their helpful comments. I think I should repeat the comments I have made previously when similar circumstances have arisen, that is, when the Speaker has been asked to review a decision reached by the chairman of committees. There is a fundamental difficulty about this in that the chairman of the committee is not only chairman of the committee but is also Deputy Speaker of the house and this, I submit to hon. members, complicates the situation when it comes before the person who occupies my position to review or reconsider a decision reached by the Chairman.