

Point of Order—Mr. Knowles

The hon. member for Saskatoon West was saying, and once again this goes to show that Beauchesne's citations and other authorities do not have force of law nor are always implemented, and I will quote what he said:

[English]

"members should not read speeches"

[Translation]

I checked with Beauchesne whether it was true, because that is not the practice here, where many members do read their speeches. Citation 309 of Beauchesne reads as follows:

It is a rule in both Houses of Parliament that a member must address the House orally, and not read from a written, previously prepared speech.

And Beauchesne is also referring to Bourinot.

This is the best indication that these citations, Madam Speaker, fall short of the written rules, sessional or special orders which regulate our proceedings. Some of them are never implemented. Some are even ignored when new practices are evolved and traditions are changed.

The example given by the hon. member for Saskatoon West is the most blatant of all. I have just read a citation from Beauchesne which is not even implemented, namely, Citation 309 (1). It says that no hon. member may read from a written speech in the House and yet this is done and there are no written rules, sessional or special orders to prevent it but this practice developed and allowed us to set aside this tradition. If we can do it in this regard, why could we not do it as well in other areas? This is my answer to the argument put forward by the hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Then he said it was required to get the unanimous consent of the House in order to bring about changes in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. Madam Speaker, this is not true. Citation 9 of Beauchesne, which I quoted earlier, states clearly that all rules can be altered by a simple majority. This practice has always been the one used to make changes in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

Now, as I said, to conclude, I do not wish to repeat myself, Madam Speaker, but it seems so obvious, it seems so clear that the motion is in keeping with the spirit of Parliament, in keeping with a long-established practice. There are special orders in specific debates to extend sitting hours, reduce the time limit on speeches, change the current rules, change the usual practice, the tradition. There is absolutely nothing there that is contrary to the spirit of Parliament. Quite the opposite, it is the end result of a practice that evolved over these last few years, particularly since we have these written rules, these sessional orders or special orders. In this case, we are not changing the Standing Orders nor the practice for the future, all we are doing is changing them for a specific debate, to adapt to circumstances and ensure that in this specific case, as has been done so often in other cases, certain rules will not apply and there will be special orders to determine the way the

debate will be proceeding in the days ahead or until completion.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, what we are introducing is a motion that is quite in keeping with the Standing Orders and the spirit of Parliament. As I said, the points made by those who oppose its value, its content are based essentially, or exclusively on a few citations in Beauchesne, and in particular Citations 311 and 423. Incidentally, Citation 423 is not relevant because in this case our preamble is not a matter of contention, it is a statement of facts that are on record in the proceedings of both the special committee and the House of Commons. This leaves Citation 311, and as I said earlier, it is written in Beauchesne's fifth edition, in the preface, the foreword. Our intention is not to establish rules governing this House. What we are doing is recognizing how the rules were applied in the past, and how the tradition evolved until now. Beauchesne is proof that the progress of Parliament requires a change of rules, a change of traditions to keep up with the times, and this we are doing through a motion passed under the majority rule, not only when we want to make permanent changes to Standing Orders, but from time to time to change them for specific debates as is the case in this Constitution debate.

● (2200)

[English]

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, may I call it ten o'clock?

Madam Speaker: The applause lasted long enough for me to now stand and adjourn the House. The hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. Beatty: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It is ten o'clock.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE—REPORTED REMOVAL OF
"E" DIVISION FROM VICTORIA, B.C.

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight because of a series of questions I have asked over the last couple of weeks concerning the projected move of "E" Division of the RCMP from Victoria to Vancouver. As far as the House of Commons is concerned, this issue started on March 6 when, after having heard rumours from Victoria of this move, I asked a question of the Minister of Justice (Mr.