

• (1710)

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) proposed to move an amendment to the motion on the environment which we have been debating throughout the day. I am now prepared to rule on the acceptability of the proposed amendment.

An examination of the wording of the proposed amendment suggests to the Chair that the Hon. Member is attempting to expand and add to the proposition envisaged in the original motion.

If I may remind Hon. Members of Beauséne's citation 437(2), it is not in order by means of an amendment to raise new questions which should be considered as distinct motions moved after proper notice. With regret, I must therefore rule the proposed amendment of the Hon. Member for Davenport out of order.

Now to the second ruling. Earlier today, the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House rose to object to the wording of the Opposition motion under discussion today on the grounds that a motion which might, if agreed to, become an Order binding on the Government, was out of order.

After deliberation, I am ready to rule on the point of order.

Beauséne's Fifth Edition at citation 412 says:

By its orders the House directs its committees, its members, its officers, the order of its own proceedings and the acts of all persons they concern—

It appears to the Chair that there are instances in which the House, in directing "the order of its own proceedings", also gives orders to the Government. Such instances are found in Standing Order 36(8), which directs the Ministry to answer petitions; Standing Order 111(4), which directs a Minister's office to produce documents; and Standing Order 123(1), which specifies that a committee report on delegated legislation, when concurred in, becomes an Order of the House to the Ministry.

The Chair notes that the relevant parts of the motion proposed today involve the introduction of a Bill and the tabling of documents, processes which are, at least arguably, parts of the procedure of the House in the same way as the examples cited above. Furthermore, both Speaker Lamoureux, on March 6, 1973 and Speaker Jerome, on November 14, 1975, have expressed strong reluctance to interfere with the freedom of the Opposi-

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tion to choose the motion to be debated on an allotted day.

For these reasons, I am also reluctant to infringe this freedom, except in the clearest cases of irregularity. I therefore find that this particular motion is in order.

Before closing, however, I wish to advise the House that this decision should not be taken as a precedent by which any Opposition motion could order or instruct the Government on a particular course of action. The Chair will continue to examine each motion before the House with close attention as to its form and content, and will not hesitate to rule against any motion that it finds irregular.

Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Beauséne—Woodbine.

Mr. Neil Young (Beauséne—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in having the opportunity today to say a few words about the motion that was put forward by my colleague, the Hon. Member from Saanich—Gulf Islands (Ms. Hunter).

The purpose of the motion itself is to embrace the principles that this Government has already accepted, and those are the principles that were put forward in the Brundtland Commission report from the United Nations. The Government itself has said that it supports the thrust of that report and all that this motion is doing is allowing the Government the opportunity to take some concrete action on the recommendations that the Brundtland Commission made on sustainable development.

In the course of the Minister's comments earlier this afternoon, I was encouraged to hear him say that finally this Government will be moving on establishing regulations on the quality of water and, in particular, drinking water.

Several years ago under the Liberal administration, I chaired an environmental task force on the quality of water in the Great Lakes system. I asked the then Minister of Health, Monique Bégin, why we in Canada had established a level of what was considered to be safe contamination of dioxins in fish at 20 parts per trillion when the United States established a safe contamination level of ten parts per trillion, 50 per cent less than Canada. The rationale behind the establishment of those standards was that Canadians on a per capita basis ate less fish than Americans. That was the response. Therefore, our bodies could absorb twice as much contamination from fish. That response did not make too much sense to me so I pursued the matter with the Minister and her officials in meetings of the Standing Committee on Health. The Minister repeated the same answer that