

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 25, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[English]

PRIVILEGE

LANGUAGE USAGE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, the Chair is now ready to take up the matter of gender neutral language raised on Thursday, March 17 of this year by the hon. member for Ottawa West, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

[Translation]

I wish to thank her for her comments and I would also like to thank the hon. members for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley for their presentations.

There is no doubt a strong movement in society to eliminate the occurrence of sexual stereotypes in all forms of communication.

[English]

Concerning the word “chairman” specifically, the current trend seems to be to remove any gender connotation, although there is no clear consensus on the most satisfactory alternative. For example, since the beginning of this Parliament the practice has emerged whereby the chairs and vice-chairs of committees have been identified using the terms “chair, chairperson or chairman” as desired, in the publications in the House. My colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, refers to herself as Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the Whole.

In our standing orders we have eliminated any reference to Mr. Speaker. At the end of each issue of our *Votes and Proceedings* the Speaker is referred to simply as Speaker. As well, any reference to a member or a minister is gender inclusive; that is, the references are to “he or she” and “him or her”.

[Translation]

However, as the hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell rightly noted, the Standing Orders still contain a number of words and phrases which could be considered gender-biased.

This is also the case in a number of other parliaments and provincial legislatures. In some of these legislatures, just as in the House of Commons, the terminology used in their Standing Orders is not necessarily the same as that found in their publications.

[English]

This is an issue which has been raised many times over the years both in the House and in committee and the Chair continues to be deeply concerned about it. Given the inconsistencies in the use of language in the publications and in the House and its committees, perhaps it is time for a committee of the House to examine the matter with a view to recommending standardization of terminology.

I agree with the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell that this is a matter which should be pursued or might be pursued by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I would urge that committee to address it during its current review of the standing orders.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1994

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-17, an act to amend certain statutes to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 22, 1994 be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order to make a procedural argument concerning the omnibus nature of this piece of legislation.

This is a new Parliament which I think has been working reasonably well in spite of our recent difficulties. I really would like to call the attention of the Chair to the nature of this particular bill and to urge the Chair to re-examine a practice we have fallen into.

The particular bill before us, Bill C-17, is of an omnibus nature. I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that you should rule it out of order and it should not be considered by the House in the form in which it has been presented. I would hope that in making your decision on the acceptability of Bill C-17 in its present form you