

basically, every bill is read the first, second, and third time. In this House there is provision for reference to a committee; that provision has been included in the Standing Orders since 1969. Mr. Speaker, the report stage was not intended to duplicate the committee stage. It was introduced to prevent abuse.

Mr. Horner: You were not here when that rule was made.

Mr. Blais: I was not born when the hon. gentleman was galloping over fences, either. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the report stage was introduced to permit this House to deal with specific amendments with which members of the committee ought to have dealt, but did not. It was not instituted in order to bring a fourth reading stage into the parliamentary process.

Mr. Horner: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. Blais: There are before the House motions to delete every clause of substance; they go to the principle of the bill. If Your Honour finds that that is an acceptable procedure, you will invite members of this House every time a bill is brought forward at the report stage to move motions for deleting each and every clause of a bill. In effect that procedure would reinstate the committee of the whole in this House even though the bill has already been dealt with in standing committee. That would mean that we have passed a redundant measure. Surely it cannot be said that so poor is our judgment that we have increased the redundant processes of this House, because that, I suggest, would be the effect of accepting these amendments.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I remind hon. members that it is not my decision whether Standing Order 75(5) can be taken advantage of in a certain way. The Standing Orders of the House are there. It would be equally applicable to suggest that Standing Order 43, providing for the introduction of certain matters into our proceedings upon unanimous consent, was originally included in the Standing Orders so that the government might intervene in regular proceedings, with unanimous consent, if there were an emergency and, therefore, that that rule ought now to be reserved for that purpose and not used by opposition members; yet that Standing Order is used almost exclusively by opposition members. It is not for me to interpret what the intention was, only what the letter of the law is at the present moment. Therefore if a certain advantage lies with members in proposing amendments pursuant to Standing Order 75(5) I say again, if that is to be changed, it will have to be changed by the procedure committee and not by the Chair. Does the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) wish to intervene on a procedural point?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, in commenting on proposed amendments you said you would reserve judgment on the amendments put forward by the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday) and hear argument on the point. I respect the good will of the hon. member for Oxford in putting forward these amendments but feel that I should make the following comments—

Capital Punishment

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I do not wish to interrupt the Solicitor General but wonder if we might not deal with the amendments of the hon. member for Oxford, in order, when they arise.

My only concern at the moment is whether the Chair ought to entertain that series of motions which seek to delete clauses, and no other question—should the Chair decide whether they should be ruled out of order at this time—I would leave any other amendments or any procedural argument on them to the moment when those individual motions are called.

Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, I have refrained from participating in the earlier procedural arguments because they were arguments which were placed before me last night and on which I ruled as chairman of the committee. But since this argument is raised for the first time in this House, and since the situation in the House is different from that pertaining to the committee, I think it might be appropriate for me to make some brief comments.

One could dispute the interpretation that Standing Order 75(5) makes a deletion in order. But I am prepared to accept that position this evening for the purposes of argument, to underline an argument which my hon. friend has already made. No matter whether deletions themselves are in order or out of order, and that is not the question on which Your Honour must rule this evening, surely any deletion which would contravene the principle of the bill falls under the ruling which Your Honour has just given. That ruling relating to the principle of the bill surely must govern all clauses of the bill, whether the proceedings be by way of deletion or otherwise. I therefore suggest that the previous ruling covers the situation with which we are dealing and that there is no necessity to rule at all on the question of deletions.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Fox (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): To sum up, my intervention closely follows the one just made by the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan). Standing Order 75(5) reads as follows:

(5) If, not later than twenty-four hours prior to the consideration of a report stage, written notice is given of any motion to amend, delete . . .

First, I consider the wording:
 . . . of any motion to amend, . . .

On the words motion "to amend" you just ruled that not all motions "to amend" are in order but only those motions "to amend" which do not go against the principle that what has been accepted by Parliament on second reading cannot be contradicted at this stage.

Well, if that principle applies to the words "to amend" it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it must apply all the more to the word immediately following, namely the word "delete". It is obvious that certain motions "to amend" can be rejected as you just did for motions aimed at bringing back the death penalty into the bill.

It then seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the same rule of interpretation must be followed for the word "delete" which comes immediately after the words "to amend", and then only motions "to delete" which do not go against the