

[English]

Mr. Ralph E. Goodale (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): For the Public Service Staff Relations Board. 1. Dr. Noel Hall was appointed by the Chairman of the Public Service Staff Relations Board as a mediator on October 25, 1976 for the purpose of conferring with officials of the Treasury Board, the Post Office Department and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and endeavouring to assist the parties in reaching a settlement of their dispute over the introduction and implementation of technological changes in the Post Office. (a) and (b) All mediation proceedings are conducted in private and the information and proposals provided to the mediator by the parties are furnished on a confidential basis to be utilized by him in the exercise of his discretion. Accordingly, there are no records of the proceedings before Dr. Hall nor is there any record of any papers presented to him by the parties.

2. For the above reasons there are no copies available of any record of proceedings or any papers presented to him.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Clark: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I should like to request the unanimous consent of the House to return to motions under Standing Order 43 for the purpose of seeking unanimous support for the motion moved yesterday by my hon. friend from St. John's East.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If I were to permit the seeking of unanimous consent pursuant to Standing Order 43 at times other than those provided in the Standing Orders, it would take away the meaning of the routine proceedings by which we govern ourselves, which provide that applications pursuant to Standing Order 43 are made prior to the question period.

Since the Standing Order calls for an application for the unanimous consent of the House, we must either decide whether that can be done at any time an hon. member has the floor or whether, according to our practice, it is to be confined to the period prior to the beginning of the question period. We have rather rigidly followed the pattern that it is confined to the period prior to questions, and if I were to permit any hon. member who has the floor by any means to make an application at any time pursuant to Standing Order 43 we might just as well abandon the provision whereby such motions are confined to the minutes prior to the question period each day. Without any directive to that effect from the committee on procedure, I am not disposed to do so.

Mr. Clark: I am not at all wishful of disputing your authority on this question, Mr. Speaker, but it is equally the case that the House of Commons is the final arbiter of its own proceedings. While I can understand and sympathize with Your Honour's concern not to establish a precedent which might interfere with the smooth functioning of the House, I believe it is recognized on both sides that there are at stake here two

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements

highly important principles, one of them referred to in the substance of the motion moved by my hon. friend yesterday, and the other having to do with the right of parliament, as distinct from simply the government, to express its opinion on this matter. What I am seeking is an opportunity to ask the unanimous consent of the whole House of Commons to vary the rule, it being understood that such a variation would not establish a precedent but would be regarded as an extraordinary response to an extraordinary situation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. In order to respect our procedures and allow an opportunity for the voicing of sentiments expressed on several occasions by members to my left, I must point out that tomorrow is another day, another opportunity for taking advantage of the provisions of Standing Order 43. It continues as a daily matter. There was nothing to prevent such an application from having been made today despite the fact that it was turned down yesterday, and there is nothing to restrict any member from putting forward the same application pursuant to Standing Order 43 tomorrow without having to circumvent our procedures or to set any dangerous precedent.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS AND ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS FINANCING ACT, 1977

MEASURE FOR MAKING CERTAIN FISCAL PAYMENTS AND OF
ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS FINANCING CONTRIBUTIONS TO
PROVINCES, ETC.

The House resumed, from Monday, February 21, consideration of the motion of Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale) that Bill C-37, to provide for the making of certain fiscal payments and of established programs financing contributions to provinces, to provide for payments in respect of certain provincial taxes and fees, and to make consequential and related amendments, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, when I spoke last night I said we were opposed to this bill because the provinces were forced into this agreement and because the measures now proposed would have a particularly bad effect on the disadvantaged provinces, including the province of Quebec about which so much has been said. I have since had an opportunity to look at what some of the provincial premiers have said about these arrangements, as well as at the record of the discussions held between the first ministers.

I hope the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) will note the following, particularly in view of his eloquent plea for understanding and support of Quebec. According to Premier Lévesque as he was leaving the first ministers' meeting several