

Government Orders

If that was corrected Parliament would not be bogged down in so much tedious rhetoric, taking the time of the House and the staff and costing the taxpayers so much money.

I have to compliment the parliamentary secretary, the House leader and the government for its ingenuity in doing things this way. My compliment, however, is a back-handed one. This type of move shows no respect at all for the whole basis of why we are here in a parliamentary institution. While I give it a back-handed compliment for the ingenuity of carrying out certain instructions or trying to move along with government business, which is commendable, this is not the way to do it. It would be a very invidious precedent. I ask the Chair to exercise the discretion and experience of all table officers in interpreting this motion to make sure it does not come to fruition.

If this happens then, boy, you can kiss goodbye—I mean our government would only be human; it will do it once and do it again—opposition discussion or debate and use a coming prorogation or summer recess as a time when people do come together. It is like the old proverbial hanging. There is nothing that focuses the mind better than when the man is marching up to the gallows. Someone said something classical to that effect.

• (1050)

We all know how this system works. There is a lot of time-clock running, yet there are certain events where there is a focus of attention. If this thing goes through, one can forget about the focus of attention and this place becomes, to me, sadly, even less of a chamber for real debate than it is at the present time.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few brief points.

First, on May 11, 1977, Mr. Speaker at that time ruled on an issue involving omnibus legislation, but it is important to note and I quote from *Hansard* of May 11, 1977, which referred to “different although related subjects”. In other words, the only reason at that time that the omnibus legislation being contested before Mr. Speaker by members of the opposition allowed to proceed was based on the fact that it was different yet related.

The legislation before us today is as follows: “An act to amend aeronautics, an act respecting exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying and selling of certain weapons, an act regarding the status of artists in Canada, and

another act concerning combating the laundering of proceeds of crime”.

Even if one were to state that the precedent of 1977 was valid, it would only be valid if the bills were different yet related. The bills of course are not related at all. Therefore, any attempt by anyone to utilize that precedent as justification would be faulty.

Second, if we cannot do something by omnibus legislation we surely, as the hon. House leader for the opposition has stated, cannot do it by omnibus motion to pass a series of different bills together. If one is wrong, the other is equally wrong.

Finally, if this precedent is allowed to proceed, then what is next? I ask the question rhetorically. If one can resuscitate five bills with this motion, or four bills, what stops one from resuscitating all legislation from the past? Carrying it to the next level, what stops us from adopting a motion today deeming that all bills have reached third reading, every single bill that is before the House right now? What stops us from resuscitating a bill from 1977, saying that that particular bill has now reached third reading, and we are going to vote on it right now? As a matter of fact, we could actually pass a motion stating it has completed third reading debate.

What we are in fact doing is amending completely the rules of the House by adopting this motion, were we to do so, or were this motion to be ruled in order. The implications of ruling this motion in order would be such that I fear we could render—if a government wanted to, and I am not saying it does—this House of Commons totally irrelevant and redundant. We would simply deem everything and anything to have been passed, to have been at third reading, or to have been at any stage if for any reason the government did not want to proceed with other stages of the bill.

I would hope the Speaker would consider those additional points I have just raised.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to be brief along the same lines as the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. This House is governed by specific rules, practices, and precedents.

As far as I can gather, it has always been the practice that when there is prorogation, all the bills on the Order Paper die. The practice of the House is that with unanimous consent, you can resurrect any bill at the point where it was when the House prorogued. That is the practice. That is the precedence. Not since Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* have we been able to see this wholesale resurrection of zombies, which the government is attempting to do with this zombie amendment,