

Air Canada

founded on the basis required by the rules, and the House cannot proceed on it. Therefore, I respectfully submit that this motion is not in order and cannot be received by you and placed before this House at this time.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. On Friday last, the Minister of State (Mr. Lewis) did consult me about speakers. He knows that we were standing right here at that particular time. If I recall correctly, he asked me how many more speakers I had on the Air Canada Bill, and I said several. He asked how many, and I said I was not quite sure, but that there would be several. He said: "Thank you, that's all I have to know".

The Minister did consult me about speakers, but my point is that you and the Table Officers should think about setting precedents. The Minister did not indicate that he was consulting me regarding the possibility of time allocation under Standing Orders 115 or 116. He consulted me about how many more speakers we had. I wonder if we want to set that kind of precedent.

My understanding is that when these rules were drafted, going back to the days of Stanley Knowles and Ged Baldwin, the practice at that time was that the House Leader from the government side would come across and say: "Look, we want to see if there is an agreement to allocate time, would you agree to some kind of an allocation of time for such and such a Bill, and if so, fine, we will do it together". That is under S. O. 115 where you require all Parties to agree. If one of the Parties did not agree, there is S. O. 116 where a majority of Parties can decide to allocate time.

● (1140)

That is the way it happened in the past. As far as I understand it, the House Leader would be up front about it and say he was consulting under S. O. 115 or S. O. 116. If we in the Opposition say no, then the Government House Leader has the right, under S. O. 117, to give notice of a motion, which he did on Friday afternoon.

I want to make the point that we were consulted about how many more participants there would be in the debate. In the absence of my House Leader I was in charge of communicating with the Government, so the proper procedure was followed. However, at that time I had no idea he was thinking of time allocation and using S. O. 115, S. O. 116 or S. O. 117. I make the point that we should be up front about those things. If you are thinking about time allocation, come across the way and ask if we would agree to one more speaker or two more speakers or two more hours or four more hours or one day or two days, and then the onus is upon us.

The last point I want to make is also very brief. At no time whatsoever would I agree on behalf of our Party to time allocation on the Air Canada Bill.

Mr. Lewis: Thank you.

Mr. Nystrom: We take that position because Air Canada is a Crown corporation which is a very important part of this country.

Mr. Lewis: Thank you.

Mr. Nystrom: We do not agree to time allocation on that Bill. That aside, we were not consulted specifically about time allocation.

Mr. Speaker: Out of an abundance of caution and patience I am going to hear further arguments, but as to whether or not there is any need for consultation, the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) seems to have almost eliminated that from consideration. In any event, I shall hear other Members, but I will now hear the Hon. Minister for State (Mr. Lewis).

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank my hon. friend from Yorkton—Melville for his considerable assistance to my argument without even having heard it.

I want to say first that if the Canadian people ever wanted evidence of the delays being perpetrated by the Opposition, the filibuster of my hon. friend, the House Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Gray), is proof positive. I want to put this Bill in perspective and say why we did what we did on Friday afternoon.

This Bill was debated on May 24, May 25, May 27, June 1 and June 3, for a total of five days at second reading. Some 20 Members have spoken on the Bill. In an effort to freshen the list of speakers there have been two reasoned amendments put forward. The Opposition even forced a deferred division to a following day in order to stall for time. There were some eight point five hours, including the first one point five hours, spent in debate. I submit that that was the condition under which we were looking at the situation on Friday.

Having said that, I want to explain, within the bounds of what I am able to say about consultations, exactly what happened on Friday afternoon. My hon. friend from Windsor West made a very good point about meeting and discussing this with formally designated persons in the Opposition. That is very easy when the formally designated people are here. One cannot always find the formally designated people. Since it is inappropriate to point out that certain people are absent from the House, I will not point out that the formally designated people of the Official Opposition were not here. However, I will suggest that the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) was here. Knowing he has an interest in this Bill I went to him as one of the two members of the Official Opposition in the House, the only one around formally or informally designated, and consulted with him. That is all I can say because I think those consultations are private and I have no intention of laying them out on the floor of the House.

I then went to the NDP and my hon. friend from Yorkton—Melville, whom I took to be officially designated. He and I had discussions as laid out by him this morning and I confirmed by