

Government Orders

• (1350)

As the day progressed it became clear to me, as the government whip, from information that came to me from other members, that the New Democratic Party was filibustering the Bretton Woods agreement. That was not in accord with arrangements that were reached earlier in the week between our House leader, who happens not to be here today, and other House leaders or their officials. It has been communicated to me in my lobby that the New Democratic Party is not keeping the commitments that were made earlier this week in terms of what would happen on this day. Whether that is right or wrong I have no direct knowledge. I simply report what I was told.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, earlier today, the request came formally from the government House leader's office, asking if we were intending to complete second reading of Bill C-93. I indicated that I thought it may not occur. In the best interests of doing business, if the government was to introduce Bill C-81, we would, in fact, agree to the completion of second reading. Our critic undertook to accomplish that and it has been done. It was under the assumption that we would continue the debate with no extension of hours. This is what the government House leader's office communicated to us so that we would agree to pass Bill C-81, which we did. I see that that agreement did not stand up.

To carry on the business of the House it requires the co-operation and honesty of all of the players. I am afraid that that is simply—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If there is going to be any further negotiations on the floor, I wish it could be done behind the curtain with the two whips and the government House leader.

I will listen to the chief whip for the opposition party.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, perhaps one might be able to share some information with all hon. members so that we clearly understand what has transpired. There was a disposition on Wednesday that two bills would be under active consideration today, namely, Bill C-81, which has now been completed in terms of debate and that we would proceed with the completion of second reading of Bill C-93.

I recognize, and one can never attribute motives or indeed, intentions to anyone, that the House leader for the New Democratic Party was not privy to those particular discussions. He may have a different view, quite rightly or quite wrongly. Let's be clear that when one is imputing motives of members of this Chamber, that those in glass houses ought not to throw stones.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The negotiations that are going on here on the floor of the House should be done behind the curtain and in committee meetings. They should not be done on the floor of the House. This is debate on Bill C-93. I think I should recognize the next hon. member for debate.

I will recognize the hon. member for Kamloops just one more time on this same point of order.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I do not want to leave this matter with these inaccuracies in the air. I would like to clarify one point.

Regardless of the discussions that have taken place earlier in the week, earlier today on a formal visit from the government House leader's office, the question came, "are you prepared to complete Bill C-93 today at second reading?" I indicated that I thought not. Again, one cannot predict the future in this place ever, as you well know, Mr. Speaker. I thought we had sufficient numbers of speakers that it likely would not conclude.

The official spokesperson from the House leader's office then indicated, "the government would like to pass C-81 today." I said that that was fine, we would agree to co-operate to facilitate that, because we felt that we had an obligation to seriously consider these two bills, which we did.

Bill C-81 was debated and passed. That is set aside. Let me go back to C-93. I then asked, "will the government extend hours," and was answered "absolutely not." I repeated the question because it is important that we know, particularly on a Friday afternoon when members are moving to their constituencies for the weekend. I asked them seriously, "Will the government extend hours today," and he said, "absolutely not." I assumed the government would not extend hours. All that transpired earlier today and the government has obviously decided to extend hours.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Debate on Bill C-93. The hon. member for Kamloops on debate.