

*House of Commons*

In closing, I submit that the Minister himself has probably now recognized that his motion is deficient. He has more than recognized it; he has actually admitted it in the House by offering certain corrective measures. I submit that the motion is so badly flawed that on the basis of those flaws themselves, the motion should be unacceptable to the Chair.

The assurances that the Minister has tried to provide to the Speaker and to the House in no way make the motion any more acceptable. I know the Speaker will rule on the motion as it has been put and as it is printed in its present form, not on good intentions expressed by the Minister after the motion has been put. After all, we know the record of this Government on keeping its word, and even more important, the Speaker, of course, has to rule on what is printed and what is offered to the House at this point.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, we have now added a new wrinkle to this procedural debate. When we began this, we were all aware of what the government order of business was for the day, and as you were rising, about to put the question, the House Leader of the Official Opposition and I rose, you recognized us and we began a procedural debate on the acceptability of the government business of the day. However, my recollection is that the question was never put by Your Honour, that the question itself was never on the floor.

I would contend that the Deputy House Leader of the Government cannot give notice of closure on something that we are not even debating, yet I think that is what he has attempted to do. It is further abuse of the rules, traditions, and practices of this House.

I contend that for two reasons, this is out of order. The first is the nature of the motion of the Government under government business on the Order Paper and the second is what the Deputy House Leader has just done, which is to attempt to give notice of closure on a question that has yet to be put.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make some very brief submissions on this matter. I would submit, Your Honour, that the motion of the Government would result in a very serious and marked departure from the rules of this House. I would submit to you, Sir, that you ought to consider in the circumstances what the extenuating circumstances are that would warrant such a serious departure from the rules of the House.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the so-called January 1 deadline is not so sacrosanct that in the event that this Parliament does not rule on the free trade agreement by January 1, the result will be serious in nature. In fact, we are told by members of the Ministry that the January 1 deadline may in fact be extended.

Having said that, Sir, I would ask you to take into consideration the rights of the newly elected members of this Parliament. As you know, approximately 130 Members of the House are newly elected. In other words, the new Members did not participate in the debate in the Thirty-third Parliament on Bill C-130. This particular issue, the free trade agreement signed by our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the President of the United States, was a central issue in the election campaign. In fact, it was a dominating issue in the campaign itself.

The people have in fact decided. Needless to say, a majority of those who decided and who cast their ballots in fact voted against the Government, against the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal. Sir, the 130 newly elected Members, including members on the government side, have a right to express their points of view and to fulfil the mandate given to them in the election campaign, that is, to speak out in a full and complete discussion of the free trade agreement here in the House of Commons. To accept this motion and to deny the new Members of Parliament their opportunity to speak and to express their points of view on this particular piece of legislation would be to deny them their right to fulfil the mandate given to them in the general election of November 21, 1988.

In closing, might I say to you, Sir, that as the Speaker of the House you have an obligation to protect the rights of the newly elected Members of Parliament and to give them the opportunity to discuss this matter. Sir, might I remind you that a few short days ago, they put their trust in you to protect their rights, so I would ask you, Sir, to keep in mind my submissions when you deliberate on this most important point.

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I originally indicated my intention to speak on the motion in the name of the Minister of State for Treasury Board (Mr. Lewis) of December 12, 1988. However, the latest effort by the Government to have closure on a debate we have yet to start, I think, enhances what I wished to say in the first place. Not only are we in a situation where the Government is willing to suspend the rules for a specific piece of legislation, but we are now in the