

*Business of the House*

about this unnecessary and anti-democratic measure, the motion to suspend the rules. I challenge you to show you care about the handicapped and about the people of this country generally.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, on many occasions through various officers, representatives and organizations of this House we have taken steps regarding concerns of the handicapped. In light of the suggestion made by the Hon. Member for Annapolis Valley—Hants (Mr. Nowlan) may I suggest that, as far as the New Democratic Party is concerned, we are prepared to debate Bill C-131 today, right now, in order to expedite the matter and to get it into committee. I am making that offer. We are prepared to debate it now, tomorrow, Monday, any day. I think it is an excellent suggestion.

It is that type of leadership that has just been shown by the Hon. Member which is needed when the Government says, "Listen, we are concerned about matters regarding transportation and the handicapped. We are prepared to introduce legislation". As my hon. friend, the House Leader for the Official Opposition, has indicated, he is interested in co-operating. We are prepared to co-operate. As a matter of fact, we will deal with it right today. Let us deal with it today. If we do not deal with it today, the sooner the better.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Mr. Speaker, I was the one who raised this matter. I did not want to get into debate.

I have been around here for a few years, the same as some of the Hon. Members opposite and the House Leaders, too. My hon. friends and the handicapped well know the purpose of my intervention. With respect, the debate is not here on the floor of the House. The Government has shown leadership and taken the initiative. It has introduced a Bill after consultation with the handicapped. It is now up to a committee of the House to see if the consultation is reflected properly in the Bill.

Quite frankly, if my hon. friends who just spoke understand fully—and I am not saying that they do not, but want to make sure they do—the problems that the standing committee focused on concerning the handicapped, then there will not be a long debate. I am not trying to put the handicapped forward as hostage to the free trade motion, or any other motion before the House. The purpose of my intervention is to show good faith on all sides for a fundamental group that needs help, and needs help now. It is not for debate but, by all-Party agreement—and that is the way it will move whenever it moves—to move it into the committee so that it can decide if the consultations have produced effective results. Then we will report back and hold the debate whenever that fits into the government's timetable.

It was not my intention to play cat and mouse with the present procedures and motions before the House. My hon. friend from Windsor West and my hon. friend, the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, know that full well, and so do the handicapped.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Speaker, sometimes, and I have seen it before—I recall the Constitution debate—on the floor of the House we really can negotiate. I thank the Hon. Member for Annapolis Valley—Hants (Mr. Nowlan) for bringing forward the proposition, which the Opposition does indeed find acceptable, that we move on to the Bill on the handicapped. They have mentioned priority legislation. The Government is seeking agreement from the House. If agreement is not forthcoming on the basis of a vote, we can determine the will of the House on extending our hours for debate to a few more hours, a few more days in order that we can handle the legislation for the handicapped, we can handle the legislation around immigration, and we can handle the priority lists which are in their hands.

● (1520)

One of the ways that we could move very quickly this afternoon is if perhaps a recorded vote is needed on the government motion, to move immediately, without further debate, to the government motion. If it is defeated, or if it passes, we could have unanimous agreement in the House, whichever way they would like it, on the basis of short speeches, or no speeches at all, to move the Bill for the handicapped through. If they have something else on the list that they would like to move through expeditiously this afternoon, the Government would be pleased to consider that. We could have a few consultations while the bells rang, if we move immediately to the vote on the motion simply to commit ourselves as a Chamber to more hours or days of debate into the month of July in order that we can do the many significant things that remain on the government agenda.

If that is the sense of the offer, we would gladly accept it, and I speak on behalf of all Members on this side. If unanimous consent were required, we would be glad to give it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Having listened carefully, it is not quite the sense that I perceived. I will hear the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray).

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** Thank you for your consideration, and I will be very brief. My hon. friend knows full well that the Government's motion is not simply to ask for a few more hours. Additional hours of sitting are already provided for in the existing rules for the last two weeks of June. The rules provide a simple way for getting those hours. What the Government of the Hon. Member has put before the House is a motion to suspend the existing rules and do something uncalled for by the rules, and unnecessary.

I would like to ask the Hon. Member why he is not willing to call Bill C-131 right now, instead of the motion to suspend the rules. It is very simple. He has the authority, on behalf of the Government to do that. He does not need my consent. He does not need the consent of the House Leader of the NDP. He does not need the consent of any Member. Under the Standing Orders he can rise right now and ask the Clerk to call Bill C-131 for second reading. I ask the Hon. Member