

Statute Law Amendment Act

Crosbie). However, we must proceed under rule 35(2) today. The first three speakers have 40 minutes with no questions. I would like to recognize the Hon. Member for York-South-Weston (Mr. Nunziata).

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You are entirely right in saying that there is no provision under our rules for questions to the three first speakers who have a 40-minute period for their speeches. However, I thought I heard an Hon. Member requesting that you ask for unanimous consent. With all due respect, I think the Chair must ask if there is consent. If there is not, of course, we will forgo the questioning. However, there might be consent, and I would plead with the Chair to ask whether there is consent or not.

Mr. Baker: The Minister is leaving. He's afraid to answer questions.

• (1550)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe the Hon. Minister has left the House. We will forgo that opportunity at this time and perhaps the Hon. Member could bring it up with the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) in order to change the rules under Standing Order 35(2) to permit a question and answer period after 40-minute speeches.

Mr. Dingwall: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It concerns this ruling, I cannot recognize the Hon. Member. I have already mentioned that.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not want to question your ruling but I thought that a Member has a right to ask for unanimous consent in order to question a Minister who has just made a very important statement which was flippant in its content. Perhaps the Speaker would be so accommodating and put forward the question to see if there is unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, indeed, the record will show that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) did not have the common decency to remain in the House to listen to Hon. Members speak on Bill C-27.

Mr. Speyer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member is correct that it is a tradition for a Minister to stay in the House to hear the critics reply to an initial speech introducing a piece of legislation. Regrettably in this instance, the Minister of Justice is now briefing the Prime Minister. He was supposed to do that at 3.15 today but he gave the speech that I was going to give so that I could be in committee with both critics.

I think everyone can understand that in these circumstances the Minister of Justice came here to give a speech but regrets that he is not here. I certainly will be listening with great attentiveness to the speeches given by both critics.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what the Parliamentary Secretary has had to say, it is obvious where the priorities of the Minister lie. The Minister had the unmitigated gall and audacity—

Mr. Mazankowski: Where were you?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion is that Bill C-27, an act to amend certain Acts having regard to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, be now read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. I would like to hear the Hon. Member's debate.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to comment on the fact that the Minister has shown disinterest in this particular piece of legislation, but the Minister himself—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Will the Hon. Member please carry on with his speech on the Bill?

[Translation]

Mr. Rossi: Listen, you clown on the other side who does not know anything!

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raises a point of order to explain the absence of a colleague. That Member was not in the House when the same Member for—I forget the name of his riding—pointed out that our critic was not in the House. So he explains—

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order. The Hon. Member was in the Chamber when the Minister was here. He understands what is going on in the House. The Hon. Member for York South-Weston (Mr. Nunziata) has the floor for debate on Bill C-27.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I fully intend to debate Bill C-27. It is important to note with respect to Bill C-27 that the Minister is not here. As I indicated, it shows a lack of interest on behalf of the Minister of Justice and I did intend—

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Before the Hon. Member keeps sounding off, I think he should explain where he was for the first three-quarters of the speech by the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Mazankowski: Where is the critic?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order. This is exactly why I do not want to hear debate about who is in the House and what is happening here. The debate is on Bill C-27. The Hon. Member has been around for six or seven months and I hope he understands the situation. I do not want to get into