

reasonable and intelligent debate to give us the appropriate time to look at the bill before it is introduced.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that when there is no postal dispute at this time in the country, we have an act to provide for the continuation of postal services. I think it is only reasonable that the House of Commons ask that a member of the cabinet return to the House and do his or her work.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I thank the various members who have spoken for giving their opinion, but the Chair would point out that nowhere do the Standing Orders say that a minister must be present to second the tabling of a bill. Therefore, I—

Mr. Gauthier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Yes, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier on a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Before you so rule, Mr. Speaker, I think that nothing in the Standing Orders says that a parliamentary secretary or another member of this House can second a bill either.

The customs and traditions of this House have always required two ministers, one to move and the other to second, and that is how it has always been. That is how it should be too, Mr. Speaker.

I see where you are coming from and you will probably rule that the Parliamentary Secretary to the House Leader can second the minister's motion. But, Mr. Speaker, I challenge you to show me before you give your ruling exactly what Standing Order you base it on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has the floor on the same point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a couple of points.

The first is that we are operating under House order which all parties agreed to last week. The reason we agreed to that is we wanted to see the negotiations continue over the weekend in the hopes that what we would see happen is an agreement without the House having to act as we are prepared today.

Point of Order

The second point is that there is no doubt in my mind that we try by tradition to have a second minister here. I have seconded bills.

I see we have a minister now, so we can continue.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I ask the Opposition House Leader not to prolong it unduly since there seems to be a solution to our problem. The Hon. House Leader of the Opposition.

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to underline, now that a second minister has entered the House, we will be able to proceed with second reading.

I cannot allow the parliamentary secretary to suggest that this matter is of such great importance that the government cannot provide in this Chamber two members of the cabinet to be in the Chamber at the appointed hour, twelve o'clock, in order to introduce this bill.

I find it totally unacceptable. I find it exceptionally sloppy on the part of the government and it underlines the sloppiness of the government in its desire to try to solicit co-operation from the opposition parties which have co-operated at every stage of this particular operation.

I wish to put the parliamentary secretary on notice through you, Mr. Speaker, that this kind of conduct, this kind of behaviour certainly does not lead us well in terms of co-operating in the future on future bills, on future motions and anything that the government wishes to bring in in terms of parliamentary legislation.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I cannot let that very strong language rest on the record without some sort of comment.

I want to indicate to the opposition members and particularly to the House leader of the opposition that certainly we appreciate the co-operation he has given us. I want to look forward to it in the future, and he knows full well that we on every occasion try to do our best co-operate and to work with him.

He should understand as I am sure everybody else in the House does that we have an important cabinet meeting going on at this moment. As a result of that, a