

The Order being read for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill C-243, An Act to amend the National Defence Act and other Acts in consequence thereof;

The honourable Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) raised a point of order to the effect that as neither copies of all of the evidence taken before the Standing Committee on National Defence with respect to the consideration of the said bill nor copies of amendments proposed thereto were available to honourable Members, the consideration of the said bill in Committee of the Whole should not be proceeded with at this time.

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: There are two points raised by the honourable Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). The first one deals with the question of the report, the honourable Member, with support from other honourable Members, referred to citation 318(1) of Beauchesne's fourth edition. I must say with respect that I tend to agree with the proposition advanced by the Government House Leader that the only requirement in that citation is that information be available for honourable Members. That suggestion did not appear to gain much support from honourable Members on the opposition side when it was made, but on reflection I believe this is the purpose of this citation and, as honourable Members know, the amendments are now before the House in two forms, in the form of the report which was tabled and which is now officially before the House and in the form of the amended bill which has been distributed.

Of course I fully recognize that distribution might be a bit late, but the report could not be distributed until it was tabled in the House. This causes difficulty but it is not really a point of order; it is really a question of convenience.

I note that the honourable Member for Edmonton West during his presentation appeared to appeal to the Government House Leader rather than to the Chair assuming, I would think, that this is something the government should agree to rather than for the Chair to rule that it was a valid point of order.

On the other point, the suggestion is based on the desirability of letting the order proposed for consideration this afternoon stand long enough for honourable Members to familiarize themselves with the evidence. I point out to the honourable Members that it is not for the Chair to decide whether one hour, one day, or one week is sufficient time for Members to familiarize themselves with the evidence, and because of this I do not think I can interfere to ask the House not to proceed with the order of business called this afternoon by the government.

The honourable Member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) having pointed out that Clause 2 of Bill C-243 when given first reading by the House, indicated by underlining and vertical lines, changes from the original Act and that these indications were not contained in the bill as ordered reprinted by the Standing Committee on National Defence, raised a question of order with respect to which version of the bill was to be considered by the Committee of the Whole.

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Of course, this is a very interesting point. I cannot see much difference between the procedure proposed now and the procedure usually