

*National Defence Act Amendment*

stage, and this brings up another point. The second point, or putting it more correctly, the second difficulty on which the Chairman ruled had to do with standing order 16 which says that private members' business shall continue. Quoting the relevant parts of standing order 16 we find these words:

The proceedings on private members' business, . . . shall not be suspended by virtue of the operation of the provisions of standing orders relating to the adjournment of the house . . . or to the allocation of time to certain debates.

It is quite possible that that wording refers to the allocation of time to certain debates, or to the discussion about that allocation of time. That wording may also refer, and probably does refer, to all debates taking place during the allocation of time, and herein arises the uncertainty.

My final point is this. It is clear, I submit, that the private members hour should not be interrupted or dispensed with unless there are specific provisions to that effect in the standing orders. Nothing in the standing orders says that the private members hour under these circumstances shall be dispensed with, and there was nothing in the order of the house allocating time which said that the private members hour should be dispensed with. Under those circumstances we ought to proceed with private members' business.

I am not raising my argument to delay the house. Should Your Honour decide that private members' business is not to be proceeded with, I shall continue with my remarks that were interrupted at 5 p.m. Surely, however, if we have rules, then we ought to know what the effects of those rules are.

**Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre):** It would never occur to Your Honour, because of your obvious fairness, that this discussion was designed to delay the debate on the unification bill. Remarks to that effect were made from the government side of the house, and they might leave the wrong impression in Your Honour's mind.

**Mr. Hellyer:** Do not smile when you say that.

● (5:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Churchill:** The hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka in his closing remarks has shown that there is here an abrogation of private members' time. The submission made earlier to the Chairman was on that point. The government does not infringe on the time of private members unless specifically

by motion or by taking other procedure in accordance with the rules. I recall that in a number of years when we were reaching the end of the session and attempting to conclude the business of the house we found it necessary to eliminate the private members hour. This was always done by a motion to that effect. The ambiguity which is contained in the rule under which we are operating led us to draw this matter to the attention of the Chairman and now to Your Honour's attention.

I have put in a plea earlier for the rights of private members who have frequently given up their time during the course of this session, and who should not be asked to do so again because there are 175 bills in the names of private members set down for the consideration of this house. This constitutes an additional contribution of mine to the very good argument presented by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say only a few words and I am afraid that what I say will not be of great assistance to Your Honour. It is obvious that you have a very difficult problem on your hands.

If I can recall our discussions about this rule, rule 15A, when we were adopting it a couple of years ago, the intention was that a day on third reading would be the same as a day on second reading or in committee of the whole house. But I am bound to say, as one reads carefully the exact words of that standing order as we have passed it and of the other standing orders, that the case presented by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka and by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) is quite strong.

I will go further and cite another point in their favour. In *Votes and Proceedings* of Monday, March 20, there appears the second report of the special committee on procedure. One of the recommendations made in that report is that standing order 15(4) be amended. The purpose of amending standing order 15(4) was to put together in one place the instances where the private members hour may be suspended.

The report is interesting to read in the present context and it suggests that even in the committee on procedure we are a bit confused on this point. On page 1552 of *Votes*