When my colleague from Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing spoke, he made reference to the fifth edition. I have what appears to be the first edition in my hands, dated 1884. It says: "A motion which contains two or more distinct propositions may be divided so that the sense of the House may be taken on each separately".

It is clear that for well over 100 years, the right has been given to the Speaker to make that determination on behalf of members so that we can make an appropriate judgment on the various components of the motion before us.

I would think it would be in the best interests of all members of Parliament, and not just opposition members or independent members but government members as well to have the opportunity to say "yea" or "nay" on the particular groupings that have been suggested.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, very briefly I just wanted to reply to two things that the government House leader said.

He said that I had mentioned that this was a unique motion. I did not say that. I merely said it was a very complex one, and I think he agrees with that.

I want to point out that he did suggest that at least the proposals relating to the operations of committees could be treated differently.

I think you have some indication of recognition of the point I was making at least with regard to one of those sets of proposals. I would urge you to consider the possibility of dividing them into five categories so that we can really address them properly rather than in a confused state all mixed together.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I did not intend to speak but, as someone who has been a Whip now for two years and a bit, when somebody stands in the House and says that committees are not related to the hours of the House et cetera, I can simply say out of my experience they are intertwined.

One affects the other. Attendance, the hours of the House and all these things are intertwined in the same way that a large statute like the Bank Act which runs several hundred pages from time to time of revisions are intertwined.

We can go down a very slippery slope if we start breaking things up to the point where we pass something which on its own may make sense but has an impact on the other side. Certainly, these rule changes have been examined from the perspective of all three parties. They have been shared with large numbers of members of the House. They track back to the original parliamentary reforms package in 1984–85, and they are interconnected in a way that I did not want to leave unacknowledged in the House. Interconnection between these changes does, in fact, exist.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Chair had undertaken to hear other points of order that could be presented during the consideration of these changes to the Standing Orders that govern us. I therefore listened very attentively to what first the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing and the hon. Leader of the Government in the House, the hon. member for Kamloops, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan and the hon. member for Calgary South said to us.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan will allow me, I think, to wonder about the author and date of the book he cited. I do not think that Beauchesne was really part of our lives in those years, but nevertheless it was something quite interesting and certainly gave the chair the opportunity and the possibility of dividing things which are put to the House.

At this point I can tell the House that the Chair will look into it and will re-read all the arguments put to the House at this time. The Chair will come back with a ruling in the shortest possible time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Point of order, the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, just to seek clarification, when we were last here a case was made about whether proceeding with this debate would be appropriate.

Could you give some indication of when the Chair would be indicating its response to the arguments put forward at that time?