

Tabling of Documents

people to be heard is the primary value. That is what we believe is being frustrated by these kinds of motions.

My colleague, the Member for Cape Breton—East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall), our House Leader, our Whip, and others on this side have all said that we want to deal with this legislation, but that we want to deal with it as it should be dealt with, through the proper rules of Parliament, and that it should not be twisted and turned by the kind of devices which were presented this morning. It is important that we look at the text of what the Parliamentary Secretary said. That is the thrust of my argument.

We have heard the rules of Beauchesne's and others. However, the arguments put forward by the Government have shown clearly that the Government is frustrated and wants to use its majority to end its frustration. That is hardly a good reason for overturning the well-established wisdom of the ages which is incorporated in our orders of proceeding and the precedents of this House.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank all Hon. Members; the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski), the Parliamentary Secretary and all the others who have entered into this debate because it is a matter of some interest and some concern. I say to all Hon. Members and to the public which is watching that the Chair does not view this procedural debate lightly. The tradition of Parliament has been that procedural matters are always a legitimate means through which an Opposition can express its concern with any piece of legislation or a motion. There is, of course, the absolute tradition of the use of procedural matters as part of the cut and thrust of parliamentary affairs. I want Hon. Members to know that, because I respect that, I have listened with great attention to the comments which have been made.

I took down the comments of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry. He said, “—efficiency is not necessarily the primary objective, democracy is—”. I have certainly seldom heard it put better. It will fall to my obligation and duty to decide just how the particular matter before me is determined. Certainly in principle, I think the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) has put a long, vibrant and useful history of Parliament in very succinct terms. I thank him for it because that is very helpful.

● (1230)

I propose to defer my decision on this until eleven o'clock tomorrow morning. It would be my disposition, unless there is consent in the Chamber to do something else, to move directly to Questions on the Order Paper. However, I think that the Parliamentary Secretary was saying that if any members seem to be aggrieved at not having been able to go through the other items in the Routine Proceedings this morning, he would be prepared to move that we revert to Routine Proceedings. I think that was the intention of the Parliamentary Secretary.

I do want to say that the practice has been that a reversion back is done with consent. I am not saying, because that is the

practice, that it may always necessarily be the law, but I am pointing out that that has been the practice in this place. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary has made that suggestion and, of course, I am in the hands of the House. If the House decides to consent to that, then that would be perfectly appropriate.

I do not want to have to make a ruling at this time on whether or not that can be done with a vote and without consent. However, if there is consent the Chair would be happy to do that. If there is not consent, then the Chair will move to Questions on the Order Paper. Perhaps I could have some indication as to whether the other side would consent.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, of course, we would like to go back and complete Routine Proceedings but we cannot agree that the motion be put to the House, because you will understand that that would destroy the argument we have been making to you this morning, that there cannot be a motion that supersedes . . . This would be a superseding motion and I do not think that would be acceptable in terms of procedure. The House can do those things with unanimous consent, but I do not want it to be done by way of a motion because I believe it would destroy the arguments we have been putting this morning. However, by consent, I agree.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I will also give unanimous consent on the part of the New Democratic Party to begin with Petitions at this time. However, I suggest that it only be done with the caveat of all the preconditions listed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Parliamentary Secretary could help the Chair. There seems to be consent to go back to Petitions, if that is what the Parliamentary Secretary was suggesting.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I want to advise the House that we will be answering Questions Nos. 78 and 79 today. I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Gauthier: You have not got consent.

Mr. Lewis: I have not asked for it yet.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Chair can help. The Parliamentary Secretary has suggested that that is what he would be doing. I think it is understood that we are not at that point yet. I am anxious to know what is the will of the House and perhaps the Parliamentary Secretary could help in that respect.

Mr. Lewis: Now that I have tabled the questions, I would be prepared to move, seconded by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski):

That the House do now revert to Presenting Petitions and continue with the balance of Routine Proceedings until they are completed or 1 p.m., whichever comes first.

I suggest that the Government will undertake that no government Bills will be introduced under Introduction of