

*Point of Order*

**Mr. Beatty:** No, Mr. Speaker, because the issue is very clear indeed. I will not take much time at all.

**Mr. Speaker:** My difficulty is that in extending appropriate courtesies I need some indication of which minister wishes to speak. The hon. minister, and I will come back to the hon. House leader in just a moment.

**Mr. Beatty:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will conclude very simply by reiterating the point that on today's Order Paper it is made clear that this motion is intimately connected to the Business of Supply. Since the earliest days of Parliament the traditions have been abundantly clear that a defeat on a supply motion is a defeat of the government. That remains the case today. That was a point that was acknowledged. The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona should be aware of the fact that that point was explicitly acknowledged earlier today by the hon. member for Surrey North of his own caucus, speaking on behalf of his caucus. He condemned the Liberal Party for proposing such a motion under the guise of a motion of non-confidence.

That was the case this morning. It is still the case this afternoon.

The members opposite can propose that the traditions in the House be changed, but that should be a subject of negotiation. It certainly does not apply to their simply unilaterally announcing that they have been changed today.

**Mr. Andre:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make an offer that indeed, if there is a desire to have this motion voted on, then by unanimous consent we can agree to put down another motion: "This House has lost confidence in the government", an appropriate supply motion for whatever reason and we could have a separate vote on this House supports the motion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North: "That this House supports Medicare", separate the two, so there is one on the supply question and one on the question of medicare. I am sure we could reach a resolution. I would be pleased to discuss that with House leaders and reach that accommodation if that is the desire.

**Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North):** Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, this morning when the issue was raised, I accepted the explanation of the minister of health. Since then I have done some checking and found out that

there in fact have been some precedents. He said: "Is there any precedent". Of course, my hon. colleague has established that there is a precedent, that in 1987 there was a similar motion that the government ruled was not a motion of non-confidence.

Based on my finding out that there were precedents, I now would like to inform the House that I am in total agreement with my colleague from Winnipeg Transcona, that there is no need for the government to interpret this as a vote of confidence.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, if there is a heaven for parliamentarians, somewhere Eugene Forsey is commenting on this debate. We all know the late respected senator was an expert in the matters of confidence. It was he who came before the special committee on the reform of the House of Commons and made the argument that we needed to find ways in which the House could express itself in ways which were considered not to be matters of confidence or non-confidence.

It was in response to that recommendation, as well as the recommendations of others and the consensus of the committee, that we made recommendations that the language of confidence be taken out of the Standing Orders. That is what I am referring to here today.

I know about the rules in 1969. I know about the origins of opposition days in the mechanism of supply. What I am contending here today and what no one has even acknowledged is that something happened in 1985. What happened in 1985 was that because that language was removed, both opposition parties and the government party were freed up to express themselves on the substance of the matter when it came to opposition day motions. This was to avoid precisely the kind of sheltered arguments that we are getting in this case from the government which sometimes we have got from both opposition parties. The confidence mechanism was used by all parties of this House to hide behind the substance of issues. There is no need for a second motion. I am saying to the government if it wants to reaffirm medicare as it says it does in substance, then let it vote for the motion and we can be done with all this tomfoolery.

I am saying that as of 1985 the government can vote for these kinds of motions and affirm the substance of motions and nothing happens. It just allows the House to express itself. What could possibly be wrong with that.