

Canadian Flag

to delete part of the resolution which is before them. That opportunity is open to all hon. members no matter what the item of business before them, particularly resolutions to be followed by a bill. Hon. members have the opportunity to amend each of the clauses of any bill presented to the committee of the whole.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think that perhaps you have the prerogative, when this motion is moved, to ask for the consent of the house, if the house so desires, to deal separately with the two matters raised by the resolution. There is also the option open to any hon. member, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said, to move that the resolution be divided, and at that time it would be easy for you to take the sense of the house as to whether the house wants to do that.

I am not going to go into all the citations brought to the attention of the house both by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill). It seems to me there is abundant precedent for putting before the house a motion which includes propositions like the two contained in the motion before us at the moment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) referred to the year 1883 and the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) quoted excerpts going back to 1770. For my part, I would like to go back to the year 292 B.C., when the Athenian Alcibiades came before the first democratic parliament in the world, the Athenian areopagus, and proposed, in a single resolution, that the Athenian parliament simultaneously declare war against Sparta, the Peloponnessus and Sicily.

The Greek areopagites, in their great wisdom, then thought that they should divide the motion, so as to declare war against Sparta and the Peloponnessus, but not Sicily. Mr. Speaker, this happened in the year 292 B.C. This means that the most ancient rights of the people's representatives do not go back only to the 16th and 18th centuries, but to the 3rd century B.C.

Mr. Speaker, the most ancient right enjoyed by a member of parliament who is called upon to cast his vote, is to do so—as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said a few moments ago, quoting many authorities in support of his argument—on a resolution

[Mr. Olson.]

which is in no way complex, but simple, so that he may express his opinion and say fully and completely what is on his mind.

Now, this is not the case of the resolution before us today. This resolution is complex to the point of creating a dilemma for several members of the house, and I can easily illustrate this with an example.

Suppose that the resolution would include a first distinctive flag, with three maple leaves, and a second one which would be the French tricolour, for instance, to recall the origin of the first citizens of this country. I am convinced then, that many hon. members would have been prepared to vote for the three maple leaves, but not for the French tricolour—and I would have been the first one—because we want no tie with any country. The Prime Minister himself, in such a case, would have had, for all practical purposes, to vote against that resolution.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many members of this house face the same dilemma. Therefore, it shows beyond any doubt that the resolution as presented to us is a complex, and not a simple one.

Further, that resolution is not a simple one, because it calls for a single vote on two conflicting matters. On the first one, we express our Canadianism and on the second one, we express our allegiance to another country and that, through one single vote on the same resolution.

That goes to show how complex is the said resolution.

Far be it from me to dwell on the matter endlessly, but the complexity of the resolution now being brought before us seems obvious enough to me. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said, it is up to the house to find a way to divide the resolution. In my opinion, that is very simple. It is up to the Prime Minister himself to divide it. He has stated that he does not want to do it, but I must tell him that when he went to Winnipeg to make his speech, he gained the respect of everybody in Canada. He showed he had a lot of guts. He faced a somewhat hostile crowd, but he won the respect and approval of all the young Canadian people for the courage he showed on that occasion.

Even though he stated on several occasions today that he refused to divide his motion, that is, to back-track when necessary, as he has already done, this is not characteristic of someone unable to make up his mind, but rather of someone who can appreciate the good points of a solution.