

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

They were the subject of very extensive discussions, and finally agreed to by the House last year.

Secondly, in the last year or so, we have had a proliferation of motions under Standing Order 43, which is a change in the practice of the House. There have been applications under Standing Order 43, which makes it perfectly clear that, with the unanimous consent of the House, the course of the business may be diverted for the purpose of discussing another matter of substance which has not already been listed as an item of business for the House.

May I point out, Mr. Speaker, that there are obvious reasons of good sense and policy for not permitting individual members in all parts of the House to divert the business of the House which has been proclaimed, and which has been the subject matter of consultation. When I refer to consultation I mean discussion in private with hon. members opposite and not announcements to the press or in the House. Consultation of that kind is the only effective way of putting the business of the country before the House. I may add that it is the responsibility of the government to put it before the House.

I do not contest the hon. member's right to put this motion under Private Members' Notices of Motions, but might I point out that the consequence of accepting the motion put at this time by the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk) under the heading of "Motions" would be to make it virtually impossible to continue to plan the business of the House, to continue to plan the manner in which the House would deal with the business of the country, because one can foresee here, as has been the case under Standing Orders 26 and 43, that there would be a proliferation of motions by hon. gentlemen opposite to divert the House from the business already planned for that day.

The Standing Orders have provided for a number of situations in which hon. members may seek to divert the House from carrying out its announced business. Their rights in those situations are very carefully circumscribed by the Standing Orders, and I would argue that their rights having been so determined by the House in that way, then the rights of the House as a whole to deal with the business as put before it should not be derogated by this kind of motion. This particular precedent, therefore, should not be established.

I should like to deal with a number of instances in the past that have been drawn to my attention in which there have been motions by private members at the initiative of private members, as opposed to motions by, for example, the chairman of a committee. Here, I cite the example of the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont) who has a motion on today's order paper standing in his name, and who did not move it because, I believe, the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. Saltsman) asked him not to do so today so that there could be further consultations in that regard. It has long been established that the chairmen of committees, who have instructions from their committees, may move concurrence in committee reports under the heading of "Motions". But I would suggest that we should not adopt, and there is no precedent for adopting, a practice whereby substantive questions would be raised for debate at this point rather than the other ways, under the rules.

• (2:20 p.m.)

I refer to two instances. The first was on May 23, 1932, a motion for concurrence by an hon. member in a report which stated that the price of gasoline was too high and recommended that the question be investigated by the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce. I suggest the effect of adopting that motion would not have been that of stating an opinion on a matter of government policy. In fact, the motion was not adopted on that particular occasion because it was moved that the orders of the day be read, so the question was never brought forth for decision.

I would emphasize that what was involved was a procedural action on the part of the hon. member in that case. He was not seeking to procure a statement of the House on a question of substantive policy; he was raising the question of which of the particular bodies within this chamber should consider a particular question. As such, that particular motion is distinguishable from the kind of motion we have before us today.

The other instance which has been brought to my attention was on May 19, 1947 when the redoubtable former member for Temiscouata, Mr. Jean François Pouliot, at that time moved concurrence in a report which would have had the effect of referring a petition to a special committee on redistribution for its information. There again, the effect of the motion, which was related to the inclusion or non-inclusion of a particular geographic