

Another point I want to make, which I feel is different, is the reason the government is not doing it is because it does not have the political will. It is playing the old political games of the 1970s and the early 1980s, when government had more money and was not afraid to go into debt and the public was not holding it accountable. The object was to not get into any political problems, not make any difficult decisions. Just expand the House of Commons and no one will know the difference. Just add on and play the old political game.

The Liberals have not changed. They do not realize that society has changed, the political system has changed. The demand on the public purse and the leadership of the country and the leadership in the provinces is saying be more frugal and adjust your cloth according to the budget of the country. That means we have to start here.

I give the Minister of Finance some marks for bringing about approximately an \$8 billion expenditure reduction in the budget. He has brought about reductions, which his Liberal friends resisted for a long time. It took months before the cabinet could turn it around and say they were going to support the Minister of Finance in these expenditure reductions. They just said they would not do it. Finally somebody told them the public wanted expenditure reductions and it was done in the last budget. That took some political will. As Liberals they are still afraid to make some major decisions for the country, and that concerns me very much.

Mr. Volpe: We are making this one.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): In Bill C-69, again we see a lack of political will to make a major important decision.

I think I should leave it at that, because the government wants to defend its position, which is indefensible and unacceptable at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the division on the question now before the House stands deferred, and I will get back to you after consulting the parties to inform you of the time agreed upon.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would urge the Chair to consider scheduling the vote for 1.30 p.m. for the following reason. If this bill is not passed by the House of Commons later today in its final version, it may well die as, under one of its provisions, the bill must be passed by the other House and receive royal assent no later than the 20th day of the current month. This means that if the bill with all its provisions is not passed today at the latest, we will be unable to deal with this matter, and the bill will die.

I suggest that, when considering the submissions of the two political parties in this House allowed to present proposals to the Chair regarding the timing of the vote, the Chair should keep in mind that the bill must be voted on not only at the amendment stage but also at final reading later today. Otherwise, this would be an academic exercise.

This concludes my submission to the Chair. I hope that this bill, which was drafted by a parliamentary committee after the committee reached a consensus, will clear all stages. I think that the loss of this bill would be very unfortunate and prejudicial to all.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Madam Speaker, our Standing Orders are very clear on this issue, and I am going to take the liberty of reading you an excerpt to refresh everyone's memory.

Our Standing Orders very clearly state that the Chief Government Whip or the Chief Opposition Whip may approach the Speaker, while the bells to call in the members are being sounded, to request that the division be deferred. The Speaker can defer the division until a specified time, but, in any case, no later than the normal time of adjournment for the following day, etc.

But, it has been the custom and actually the practice in this House, certainly since this Standing Order was put in place, that in cases where the request to defer the vote is presented for the following sitting day, only one request is made and it is made immediately, the Speaker automatically grants the request. Even if, subsequently, a second request is made by another political party, never has it been decided to grant the second request.