

Order of Business

the numerical order of the bills from number one. The person who does that calls each and every member for those bills that are printed. I might stress that the reason the bills are not printed has nothing to do with that person who does the calling. This is a matter that is entirely within the jurisdiction of the House of Commons, and the Speaker knows that certain bills have not been printed. The fact that the hon. member for Vaudreuil's bill is not printed has nothing whatever to do with the office of the President of Privy Council (Mr. Baker). I believe it has been pointed out to the hon. member for Vaudreuil, as he himself has indicated, that the reason he has not been called in respect of his bill is that his bill has not been printed.

I think the hon. member's quarrel is not with Mr. Lay, who does the phoning in a most efficient manner, but with the people who are printing the bills and who are part of the House of Commons. If a bill is printed, Mr. Lay, I might remind hon. members, phones members in the order in which they are listed and asks the member whether he is ready to proceed with his bill on that day. If the member is away at a funeral, or away for some other reason, then we end up in the position we have today.

I would respectfully suggest that members might give unanimous consent to proceed with Bill C-214, which is the only one to my knowledge that is ready to be proceeded with today.

Mr. Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. For the information of the hon. members, I wonder if the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader could tell us why Bill C-214 would be printed before a bill which has a lower number. It seems rather odd that orders are not given to the printing department to print bills starting with number one and going up the order in that fashion. Could the parliamentary secretary enlighten the House in that regard?

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that it would seem logical to do them in order. The point I am trying to stress is that it is not an official in the House leader's office who has anything whatever to do with the order in which bills are printed.

Mr. Lefebvre: I am not questioning that.

Mr. Kilgour: Possibly through you, Mr. Speaker, we could put the question to the people who are printing bills as to why they do not print them in numerical order. There may be a very good reason, but I do not think the hon. member for Pontiac-Gatineau-Labelle (Mr. Lefebvre) and the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) should direct their complaints to our office. I stress again that this matter is entirely within the jurisdiction of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Mr. Kempling: Mr. Speaker, I believe that what happens on many occasions is that a member will submit a bill with just the title and not always the detail behind it. He does this because he does not know whether it will be drawn. Then the bill may be drawn in numerical order, and it is up to the

member to get the material ready for printing. I suggest that is one of the things that happens. It has happened to me. On a couple of occasions I have submitted the title of a bill and had it drawn before I had the back-up material or the inside portion drafted, or sent over to the drafters for the proper language. This in many cases is why they skip numbers. They print whatever is available at the time of printing.

Mr. Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Burlington (Mr. Kempling) has a very good point. Let me assure the parliamentary secretary that I have no intention of criticizing Mr. Lay, whom I know very well and who has done an excellent job in his capacity of trying to help us with private members' hour. I believe the reason given by the government whip is an appropriate one, but perhaps the final authority on this should be the Chair, and I hope the Speaker can enlighten us further.

Mr. Herbert: Mr. Speaker, before you speak there are two additional points I should like to make. At least one of the bills that precedes the bill to be dealt with today was introduced at the last session and, therefore, is identical, so we should not have any difficulty in having it printed. Secondly, I would ask you directly, Mr. Speaker, whether you insist that a bill be printed before being proceeded with, and I appreciate the difficulty that arises? However, when a bill is called, and if the member is ready to proceed, is there any reason the member should not speak to it? He knows precisely what is in his own bill.

Mr. Gurbun: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be helpful to the House in deciding this matter if members understood that the bill for consideration today is in fact Bill C-16 and was presented prior to this, in 1978, as Bill C-289. In fact what we are dealing with is a bill that was printed before and is now introduced as Bill C-16.

An hon. Member: It is 216.

Mr. Lefebvre: I believe we are on 214, excuse me.

● (1610)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The point raised by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) illustrates many of the problems concerning the organization of private members' bills for private members' hour. The reason why the bills which were referred to are not printed was partly given by the hon. member for Burlington (Mr. Kempling), and that is that at the outset of a session bills are submitted in time for the draw but merely contain the title, and the staff is left waiting for instructions from hon. members as to what they want in their bills. The bills cannot be printed without knowing what will be in them.

Today there are only four bills, Nos. 202, 203, 209 and 213 that are printed. I am told that the four members concerned were not ready to proceed, although I am not in a position to verify that fact. From past experience—and I must pay a compliment to those who have been left with the job of organizing the workings of this matter—members are