

Government Orders

deems necessary to restore fair play and common sense to these proceedings.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the New Democratic Party who has made a very solid and worthwhile suggestion to the Chair that this particular time allocation not be allowed.

My colleague made reference to the Chair's decision of 1987. At that time I was the critic for the Official Opposition regarding Bill C-22 and the government House leader was the minister responsible. However, it should be noted in the record that at report stage there are 73 amendments before us and we are now on amendment No. 1. It is very difficult in view of the interest that has been expressed, not only by members of the opposition but by members of the government, that we have a thorough airing of all those amendments to give each and every one an opportunity to express ourselves with regard to this particular provision.

In conclusion, at the committee stage there were a few witnesses but there could have been more witnesses in terms of number, and discussion could have been more extensive if the government had seen its way to elaborate further at committee stage.

• (1550)

I hope the Chair will give serious consideration to the point of order which has been raised, not allow this time allocation, and fall back on the principle which the Chair has used and demonstrated repeatedly in this House; namely, a measure of fairness for all members of Parliament regardless of their political persuasion to have an opportunity to put their views on the record on a subject matter which is important, not only in terms of the aspects of intellectual property, but also as it affects our health care and as it affects consumers in this country.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will give due consideration to this worthy point of order.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Kamloops for reading those notes which were eloquent but irrelevant and not entirely factual.

All of the procedures in respect to Bill C-91 that were followed by the government were in total keeping with the Standing Orders of the House and are therefore in order.

Certainly, as the hon. members opposite have said, it is important for the Chair to be fair. It is also important for the Chair, as the Chair always does, to recognize that the rules of the House as set down by the House are necessary for us to proceed in orderly fashion.

I want to correct a couple of items. The hon. member for Kamloops talked about insufficient time. Second reading on this bill was started in June.

Mr. Nowlan: Summer recess.

Mr. Andre: In the argument given by the hon. member, time must be required for the public to have an opportunity to consider it and for public reaction to set in. I think five months is a pretty good period of time.

The hon. member over there shouting from his seat says it was summer. Do people put their brains in neutral during summer, are they incapable of considering it?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Patrick does not work all summer.

Mr. Nowlan: No, no.

Mr. Andre: I wonder if the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants would allow me to conclude my remarks.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. government House leader is replying. The House has listened carefully to the hon. member for Kamloops, the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond, and I am sure the House would want to listen to the rest of the words of the hon. government House leader.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the total time given at second reading was five hours and 15 minutes.

An hon. member: It is not enough.

Mr. Andre: It is not enough? There was some reference in the remarks of the hon. member for Kamloops as to the practice at Westminster, the mother of Parliaments. It was able to have a second reading debate on the Maastricht treaty which I think people would recognize as pretty profound in terms of the future of Britain and Europe and so on. It was able to conclude that in six hours and have a vote. For some apparent reason, on an important bill, but hardly of the same calibre as the