

Petitions

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind the House that the Government has the obligation and even the duty to deal with this matter of the order of business and to determine what the Members will consider in the House. Standing Order 22(2), which my House leader is referring to, reads as follows:

Government Orders shall be called and considered in such sequence as the government determines.

Mr. Speaker, based on our experience of the last two or even three weeks, the Government does not trust the Members of this House. It prints an agenda, a *Projected Order of Business*, regularly changes it at the last minute and expects that Members of the House of Commons can react to the way the Government wants the debate to go. Mr. Speaker, if the House is to function in a correct, orderly fashion, we must know what plans the Government intends to present to us under *Routine Proceedings*.

So if the Government cannot decide before the day itself on the order in which it will bring forward bills, be they on abortion, capital punishment or anything else, on official languages—God knows we could talk about that!—the Government is the only one responsible for the disorder. It sets the order of business and decides what the House will discuss. We in the Opposition can only deal with what the Government presents.

We deal with it democratically, after debate, and we hope that the Government will not stifle the debate with delaying tactics such as those used regularly in the House by the Parliamentary Secretary, who always has a petty point of order to find out whether the House could not sit during lunch hour. Of course we can sit during lunch hour! That happens regularly. We want to work! But the Government knows very well that in doing so, it prevents the Opposition from preparing for question period and Members from attending committee meetings. It knows that it disturbs the Opposition and that is why it does it, Mr. Speaker, because it wants to have the country believe that there is a crisis in the House, but that is wrong! The Government has been going through a crisis for a long time—we know that! It is in a crisis because it does not know where it is going. It has no direction.

Take official languages for example: I see the Parliamentary Secretary to the Justice Minister behind; he is there looking at us attentively... Where is he on the committee to give direction to the back-benchers, the gang of dinosaurs who have fun by always delaying Bill C-72? Where is he to stop them?

Mr. Speaker: I am very sorry to have to interrupt the Hon. Member. I think that the argument may be very interesting. I well understand that it is most important, but we have a point of order here and I think that the speech by the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) is perhaps... He has made a point. I understand the problem exactly and I am sure that the Hon. Minister of State can perhaps answer and after

that, I think that it will be necessary to continue with other business.

[English]

Does the Hon. Minister of State (Mr. Lewis) wish to respond?

Mr. Lewis: No.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I have a very short intervention on the same point of order. The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) suggested during Question Period that somehow he was unable to introduce legislation because of something the Opposition Parties were doing. Let me make it clear that the Government has a right to introduce legislation whenever it wants. It can introduce any legislation it wishes.

In an effort to make the House of Commons work more effectively, would the Deputy House Leader be more consistent? When the Deputy House Leader states what will be the business of the House at one hour, and we are prepared to make our thoughtful contribution, but then changes the order of business, it makes it very difficult for us Members in the House and makes it very difficult to conduct the business of the House in a proper way.

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PETITIONS

NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honour to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 106 on behalf of a number of constituents from western Canada who are very concerned about the way the Government is handling the designation for northern benefits for tax purposes. Some communities are designated and others are not.

As I indicated earlier, there are situations where half a community is designated and the other half across the street is not. It is a complete boondoggle and makes a mockery out of our tax system. It certainly flies in the face of any just, fair, non-discriminatory tax system.

The petitioners are asking the Government to consider declaring all communities in Tier 3 ridings as eligible for the northern residents deduction.

IMMIGRATION—REQUEST FOR CLOSER CO-OPERATION WITH VIETNAM

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition from some 70 residents of Spadina and other parts of Toronto nearby. They point out that a goal of the Canadian immigration law is to facilitate the reunion in Canada of Canadian citizens and permanent residents with their close relatives from abroad.