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THIRD SESSION OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
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AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-FIRST YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

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evidenced by the fact that 200 to 300 policemen of the Greater Manchester police force are at this moment surrounding the premises of the Lawrence Scott company in support of a decision by the management of that company to strip the factory of machinery and engineering products. It is urgent because today's events, which will probably continue over the next few days, are the culmination of an industrial dispute which has lasted 10 months.

It is urgent because my constituents, who live in houses which stand cheek by jowl with the factory, during the course of the dispute have been awakened from their beds by sledgehammer-wielding teams of bailiffs taking repossession of the factory. The householders' children have been subject to anxiety as a result of the hazardous helicopter operations initiated by the management. As ratepayers, they will now be obliged to pay for the massive police presence in support of the commercial activities of the managing director of the Mining Supplies Company which precipitated the dispute when it took over the Lawrence Scott company in October 1980.

That this matter is important is clear from the fact that 650 of my constituents, many of whom have invested a lifetime's skill in the Lawrence Scott company, have now lost their jobs. Some may never work again. They live in an area in which few if any other jobs are to be had. I believe that in justice my constituents are entitled to expect the House to find time to consider this important matter.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Member for Manchester, Openshaw (Mr. Morris) gave me notice that he would seek to move the Adjournment of the House to discuss "the scale of police operations undertaken by the Greater Manchester police today outside the premises of Lawrence Scott Electro Motors Limited at Openshaw, Manchester." The House knows that an application under Standing Order No. 9 is not the only procedure under which this important matter can be discussed. The right hon. Gentleman will know that my powers are strictly limited to whether we have a three-hour debate tonight or tomorrow night on the important issue that he has raised.

I have to take into account the several factors set out in the order but to give no reasons for my decision. I must rule that the right hon. Gentleman's submission does not fall within the provisions of the Standing Order and, therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

Later—

Viscount Cranborne (Dorset, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We have had today three applications under Standing Order No. 9. It is a device that is being used increasingly in the House. Will you rule, Mr. Speaker, on whether the Standing Order is being abused?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Dorset, South (Viscount Cranborne) entered the House at the last

election. It has been my honour and privilege to serve in 11 Parliaments. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear".] There are times when my Welsh modesty comes to the fore! In every Parliament in which I have served the issue of emergency debates has been raised. It is in the hands of the House to change the rule if it so wishes. I understand that it decided not to do so when the issue was raised some time ago.

Canada Bill

Mr. David Ennals (Norwich, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I apologise for speaking again, but I wish to raise an issue of which I gave you notice.

On Thursday 11 February, as reported in column 1126 of *Hansard*, my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, Central (Mr. Davis) raised with you the propriety of debating the Canada Bill tomorrow as its Second Reading might pre-empt the issues that are the subject of a petition to the House of Lords following a ruling by Lord Denning and two other Law Lords. You promised, Mr. Speaker, to make a statement at the appropriate time.

In his submissions to you, Mr. Speaker, my hon. Friend raised only the petition to the House of Lords for leave to appeal in the case brought by the Indians of Alberta, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but in addition the Indians of Saskatchewan have issued a writ in the High Court seeking certain declaratory orders. The case concerns five instruments that affect the British Crown and it was begun in the Chancery Division of the High Court on 14 January. This is not an attempt to delay proceedings in Parliament as the date for Second Reading of the Canada Bill came a month after the lodging of the summons in the High Court.

The Saskatchewan case raises issues that are not touched on in the Alberta case. I shall not go into the details of the differences, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure you that they are issues that are different from those which are the subject of a petition in the House of Lords.

As these legal submissions are being considered now, I submit that it would be improper for the Second Reading of the Canada Bill to be taken tomorrow. I am asking you now, Mr. Speaker, to take into consideration the documentation that I have supplied to you before you give your ruling, which I understand you will deliver tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: I am much obliged to the right hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Ennals). He has submitted a long document on the issue that he has raised and that is being considered. I shall give my ruling tomorrow before the Second Reading of the Canada Bill is debated, which I think is the appropriate time.

[Mr. Robert Adley]

Therefore, the Bill does not seem to be a serious legislative proposition. We have a busy day ahead. In view of the hon. Gentleman's behaviour last year, Mr. Speaker, I hope that you will not consider it an abuse of the House if I do not seek to divide the House, but merely inform it of what the hon. Gentleman did last year.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Frank Allaun, Mr. Alexander W. Lyon, Mr. Phillip Whitehead, Mr. Arthur Davidson, Mr. John Tilley, Mr. Andrew F. Bennett, Mr. Laurie Pavitt, Mr. Robert Edwards, Mr. David Watkins, Mr. Dennis Canavan and Miss Jo Richardson.

RIGHT OF REPLY IN THE MEDIA

Mr. Frank Allaun accordingly presented a Bill to give members of the public the right to reply to allegations made against them in the press or on radio or television; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time, and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 69.]

Canada Bill (Mr. Speaker's Ruling)

Mr. Speaker: On Thursday of last week, the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Cunningham) and the hon. Member for Hackney, Central (Mr. Davis), and yesterday the right hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Ennals) raised questions with me concerning the Canada Bill, the Second Reading of which is due to take place today. I have also been asked privately by other hon. Members for advice.

I will now give a ruling on the points for which my guidance has been sought.

The first question is that of language. The rule of the House is that we speak in the English language. The Bill before us is a Bill in two languages—Canadian French and English. The House will be aware that the Canadian Federal Parliament is bilingual. The Bill that is before us comes from that Parliament after very long deliberation. The long title and preamble to the Bill show that the Canadian Parliament requests the House to enact "the provisions hereinafter set forth."

Those provisions embrace the French text which, according to clause 3, is to have the same authority in Canada as the English version. [*Interruption.*] Order. This is a very important ruling.

Since the Bill is unique in modern times, it is essential for us to be quite clear in our minds about the course to follow. I cannot escape the conclusion that the bilingual Canadian Parliament, which has made the request to us to pass this Bill, is satisfied that there is no difference in substance between the Canadian French version and the English version.

In addressing itself to the substance of the Bill, this English-speaking House will therefore need to direct its scrutiny to the English version. If the House were to make any amendment to the English version of the Bill, it might well become necessary, at some later stage, for a consequential amendment to be made to the French version. However, after consultation with the Chairman of Ways and Means, I am satisfied that it will not be proper—either in Committee or on Report—for amendments addressed to the French version to be selected for debate.

It follows that the rule that requires any amendment, if it is to be in order, to be accompanied by any necessary consequential amendments, will not be so interpreted, either in Committee or on Report, as to require an amendment to the English version to be accompanied on the Notice Paper by a consequential amendment to the French version. Our debate, therefore, although confined to the English language, will in no way be inhibited from dealing with the substance of the Bill.

I have also been asked about the extent to which discussion and amendment of the Bill and its schedules would be in order. As with any other Bill, that is a matter for decision in the first instance by the Chairman of the Committee concerned. However, it may help the House if I say that I have no reason to believe that the English text of the Bill is unamendable.

In reply to those right hon. and hon. Members who have drawn my attention to the fact that certain legal proceedings are still pending, I remind them that the sub judice rule has never been allowed to prevent the House from undertaking legislation. In that context, the hon. Member for Hackney, South referred to the possible effect of the Queen's consent. However, I am satisfied on