

and it is a ruling which I think applies in this particular case.

Second, the NDP House leader should be very careful in raising a point of order such as this one today when he will know that his own colleagues and kissing cousins in the Ontario House moved closure last night.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would just like to thank the hon. member for Kamloops for raising that and the parliamentary secretary. The *sub judice* convention only applies in criminal cases and when a trial has begun in civil cases. I express regrets that we must carry on.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if it is another point of order, but I ruse just for clarification.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader was inaccurate. Closure was not introduced in the Ontario House at all. He had better do his homework.

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

The House resumed from Wednesday, April 10, consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre (p. 19027) and amendment of Mr. Dingwall (p. 19156).

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in the debate today on what I consider to be an extremely serious matter.

It seems that this government's public relations expertise has just fallen to rock bottom. Here we are debating rule changes in this assembly that would create a better atmosphere in the House and would attempt, at least in part, to re-establish the one element upon which parliamentary government depends in order to be successful.

That element of course is the element of trust. Here we have this morning, just two and a half days into a very serious debate, the government bringing down closure and not allowing those members who wish to speak in this debate the time to make their presentations.

This Chamber will be shut down on the debate tomorrow at 1 a.m. It is not a very good principle to set, in my view, at a time when we are debating changes to the Standing Orders.

I have listened for the last couple of days, both in the House and in my office via television, to the various

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speeches that have been made. I must say that a lot of very excellent ideas have been put forward.

The speakers who have preceded me have attempted to use a band-aid approach on a very serious wound or have tried to treat a disease when in my view the animal, that is the House of Commons, is dead in terms of its being a democratic and viable legislative body.

For the life of me I cannot understand or appreciate any element of the work we do here as ordinary members of Parliament to have any bearing or relationship whatever on the legislative process.

The reasons for this are many, not the least of which is that we are saddled with an archaic institution that still insists on allowing the executive branch of government not only to be part of the legislative branch but in fact to dominate the legislative branch and indeed to control it. Nothing could be more absurd than that kind of situation.

In order to reinforce or to maintain that control the government of the day, whether it is the present one or all the previous ones, uses the ancient institution known as confidence. In order for the government to survive we have allowed the myth to continue in this Parliament that says: "If the government loses the confidence of the House, it must resign."

Yet, in practice this myth in terms of confidence has not been applied and has not been used in this Chamber for I do not know how many decades. Really, it is a hollow myth, a hollow threat, that every Prime Minister and every cabinet uses in order to maintain solidarity in the ranks of the government of the day.

In the meantime it deprives—I am speaking now of confidence—us as members of Parliament to act as legislators. All we do is debate, discuss and vote. If you are in the opposition, you almost always vote against the government. If you are on the government benches, you almost always vote with the government. If you decide to bolt the party line on a given vote and you are a member on the government side, you make absolutely certain that your vote will not bring down the government and that there are enough government members in order to maintain its majority in the House.