

Time Allocation

dilatory motions and their effect, that would have called the motion of the Hon. Member for Vegreville up at six o'clock, at which time that motion would have been disposed of, and the debate having been deemed to have been over at 5.12 on the motion of the Minister of Transport, the vote on the motion of the Hon. Member for Vegreville would be immediately followed by a vote on the motion of the Minister of Transport. That all hinges on what interpretation the Chair chooses to place on the word "proceedings".

I contend, in the context in which that word is used in Standing Order 82, that the word "proceedings" can only mean one thing, and that is debate; and that debate can only mean one thing, and that is debate on the motion put by the Minister of Transport.

The other interpretation, of course, which can be placed on it is that included in the interpretation of the word "proceedings" is the motion of the Hon. Member for Vegreville. Because Standing Order 82 never contemplated a situation such as this, it is my respectful submission that that would be a distortion not only of the literal wording of Standing Order 82 but also the intent of Standing Order 82.

In Bourinot's Parliamentary Procedure, we find no specific reference to "proceedings" and its definition, but we find a reference to "Incidental Interruption to Proceedings" at page 228, which sets forth the following under paragraph XIV:

Incidental Interruption to Proceedings.

Besides such interruptions of business as are prescribed by the rules of the house, such as private bills at 8 o'clock on Tuesdays and Fridays, or by a member, after due notice, rising to move a closure of debate, or by some special order, the time for a consideration of which has been reached, the proceedings of the house may be interrupted by a question of privilege or of order which calls for the immediate interposition of the house, by occasions of sudden disorder in the house and proceedings occasioned thereby, or by a message from the governor-general requiring the attendance of the house in the Senate. When the cause of the interruption has ceased or the proceedings thereon have been disposed of, the debate or business in hand is resumed at the point where the interruption had occurred.

My submission is that such an interruption occurred in the proceedings triggered by the Minister of Transport in the form of the motion made by the Hon. Member for Vegreville. Therefore, I cite that paragraph in support of my contention that his motion should have been disposed of at six o'clock rather than now, and then we would have proceeded with the motion made by the Minister of Transport.

One further submission I wish to cite in order to support these submissions to the Chair—regardless of what happens here tonight vis-à-vis the vote, it is going to happen; but I hate to see a bad precedent sitting on the books with respect to the timing—from the Eighteenth Edition of Erskine May. I do not believe the wording has been altered in the more recent Nineteenth Edition. At page 84 of the Eighteenth Edition, the meaning of the term "proceedings in Parliament" is set forth. Allow me, Madam Speaker, to cite at some length from that

precedent:

The meaning of the term "proceedings in Parliament."—

The primary meaning, as a technical parliamentary term, of "proceedings" (which it had at least as early as the seventeenth century) is some formal action, usually a decision, taken by the House in its collective capacity. This is naturally extended to the forms of business in which the House takes action, and the whole process, the principal part of which is debate, by which it reaches a decision.

● (1730)

I cite that particular passage from that precedent, Madam Speaker, to support my submission that "proceedings" as used in Standing Order 82 means debate and that the two terms are interchangeable and exclusively so. The citation goes on:

An individual Member takes part in a proceeding usually by speech, but also by various recognized kinds of formal action, such as voting, giving notice of a motion, etc.—

I could write the words in there "a motion to proceed to Orders of the Day", such as that made by the Hon. Member for Vegreville. I again quote:

—or presenting a petition or a report from a Committee, most of such actions being time-saving substitutes for speaking.

One might question the veracity of that observation, Madam Speaker. I quote:

Officers of the House take part in its proceedings principally by carrying out its orders, general or particular.

And so the precedent goes. My submission is—I am having difficulty, even with the assistance of the public address system, overcoming the murmurs opposite. I am sure they would not want to see a bad precedent put on the books any more than we would. The time is being—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, the time is being very usefully spent and I am very happy that the Chair and its officers want to hear these submissions for the purpose of coming to decisions in the future with respect to this kind of situation.

The submission that I am making is that the term "proceedings" used in Standing Order 82 is limited to debate and that the question on the motion put by the Minister of Transport should have been put after the time for the lapsing, according to the Chair's own numerous rulings, on the motion of the Hon. Member for Vegreville.

It is, in my submission, more logical to interpret Standing Order 82 to have meant that we should have returned here at six o'clock, had the bells rung that long, for the purpose of voting on the motion put by the Hon. Member for Vegreville, and then immediately thereafter have proceeded with the motion of the Minister of Transport. However, it may not be necessary for the Chair to come to a conclusion which might—I do not suggest it will, but if my submission are accepted I could use that term—set an improper precedent.

If the question were now to be called on the motion of the Hon. Member for Vegreville, it is going to take us 10 to 15 minutes to record the division. The Chair will then be obliged to call the motion of the Minister of Transport. The yeas and