

Point of Order—Mr. Attewell

Windsor West (Mr. Gray) that my reasoning on the first set of questions was that, as far as I could tell, there was no mention in the body of the questions as to how they related to the conflict of interest issue. That was my reason in that case.

For the last few days the Chair has tried to grant as broad a latitude as it could within the practices of the House. The Chair has been quite concerned about where to draw the line. I will be happy to look at the arguments and return to the House. I will recognize the Hon. Member for Don Valley East (Mr. Attewell) on a separate point of order.

QUESTIONS PUT TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is a very important rule in this House. I would like to draw your attention to Standing Order 66(3). As I understand it, it provides that any Member who asks a question during Question Period and, for whatever reason, thinks the answer is incomplete or unsatisfactory, is able to send notice to the Clerk and participate in an Adjournment Debate. Section 66(3) outlines that the Member has up to seven minutes in which to speak and that a Minister of the Crown or a Parliamentary Secretary has up to three minutes in which to speak.

With great respect, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring it to your attention that last Monday I asked the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Energy, Mines and Resources a question and wanted to pursue it through the Adjournment Debate. I sent a note to the Clerk at the Table. I was later advised that this process was not available on a question asked of a chairman of a standing committee.

• (1520)

With great respect, given my extensive experience of 20 months in this House, I ask that you consider this question. It may have been a drafting oversight. If not, could we perhaps avail ourselves of the reason for what appears to be an omission?

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I think the second part of the point of order by the Hon. Member, as I understood it, about being able to have what we call a "Late Show" on his question, is a point worthy of consideration. If the rules as interpreted by you, Sir, in your judgment, are too narrow—and I hope you will not find that—I will be happy to consult with my colleagues about possible changes. However, if he was suggesting in the first part of his point of order that there is something questionable or improper about raising points of order concerning Question Period, I respectfully submit that whatever the rules say about Question Period, there are innumerable precedents concerning points of order being raised, listened to by the Speaker, and accepted. I just want to put that on the record.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think the Hon. Member was suggesting that. The matter has been brought to my attention. I am afraid the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) is

going to be slightly disappointed because I am ready to say something.

The Chair looked at this matter when it was brought to my attention by the Table Officers at the request of the Hon. Member for Don Valley East (Mr. Attewell). I have examined the rule quite carefully. It seems to me that the rule was drafted in the context of questions to and answers by Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries. The whole issue of a change which would allow questions to the chairman of a standing committee or whatever is not contemplated in the rule. I conclude that from the part of the rule which indicates that a Minister of the Crown or a Parliamentary Secretary speaking on behalf of a Minister, if he or she wishes to do so, may speak in reply for not more than three minutes.

I have to find that because I have to rule that the chairman of the committee may not reply. The reason for this is that the chairman of the committee is not mentioned here as having a right to reply. Therefore, if the House follows me, I have to rule that the first seven minutes of the "Late Show" cannot be, under the rules as they are written, granted in that situation. In other words, the right to comment carries with it the right to reply. The rule says that. If I have to rule that no reply is proper, then I have to rule that the commencement is improper. I do not think I have any other choice, given the rule.

Therefore, I suggest that if Members wish the rules changed, they will have to proceed that way. House Leaders may wish to advise me that they want me to interpret the standing order in some other way, but that is the way the Chair interprets it for now. If the Hon. Member for Windsor West and the Parliamentary Secretary are asking me to say that without making a final decision, I am happy to do so and then to discuss it further.

On another point of order, the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata).

REASON REQUESTED FOR DISALLOWANCE OF S.O. 21
STATEMENT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, while I was making a statement pursuant to Standing Order 21 today, Your Honour prematurely cut me off. I would like to ask Your Honour to explain why I was not permitted to make a full statement pursuant to Standing Order 21.

Mr. Speaker: For the reasons I indicated at the time. In my view the statement was out of order.

Mr. Nunziata: May I ask why the statement was out of order?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member may wish to consult the rules. I think it will be clear.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, if I may—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Nunziata: If I may?