

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 9, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

POINT OF ORDER

ALLOCATION OF TIME DURING DEBATE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, if you would ask for unanimous consent, I think you would find that the House is favourably disposed to operate in a manner similar to the rules we followed yesterday. Each caucus makes its own decision as to whether or not it wants to use up their 20-minute time slot in one of the two following methods; first, that the Member could use the traditional 20 minutes, with a 10-minute question and answer period, or alternatively, as we did yesterday, the caucus in question could split up the time into a 10-minute speech, followed immediately by a five-minute question and answer period, followed immediately again by another Member of the same caucus with a 10-minute speech, and again followed with a five-minute question and answer period.

I think you will find, Mr. Speaker, that the House is favourably disposed to this kind of initiative. It is exactly the same as the procedure we utilized yesterday. If the House agrees, perhaps because of the time at which we will be starting, I could indicate right now that if such is the case, our first speaker will be starting with a 20-minute speech because it will be our lead-off speaker.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the suggestion made in terms of today's proceedings. We certainly will co-operate but we have a problem, and that is concerning the normal rotation of speakers. We in the New Democratic Party will not benefit from this change because we likely will only have one speaker today. Our first speaker will also go for the 20-minute and 10-minute period.

One of the problems we have is that there is little benefit in terms of co-operating on a day like today. Perhaps, having flagged this problem, for future opposition days when we are making these suggestions, we could consider that. However, for today, in the spirit of co-operation and more important, a willingness to try some new approaches to debating in the House, we will certainly be co-operating.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that the Government is prepared to co-operate in this as well. Our concern would be that we would like to have the Minister speak this morning before 11 o'clock. That would be our only concern. It does not affect the 20-minute, 10-minute, rule.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I see there is a disposition of the House to proceed on that order.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte) moves:

That this House condemns the Government for its short-sighted and punitive policies that are designed to eliminate passenger rail services in Canada despite the essential nature of these services to the development of communities in all regions of the country.

• (1010)

He said: Mr. Speaker, as is always the case, of course, the Speaker occupies a position of great authority and, consequently, neutrality in the House, and just as a Speaker should, you read that motion clearly, concisely and dispassionately. Because you read it with the latter adjective attached to it I think it bears rereading since