

The Address—Mr. Huntington

May I suggest that the Chair proceed as Mr. Speaker Michener did at the time when he received the amendment on the tenth day; he allowed the debate to continue without restriction while he considered the matter and then ruled on it. I suggest that the Chair has the luxury of so doing until the eighth day, on Thursday.

I suggest that there is a problem here. It would not surprise me to have the Chair come back and say that Standing Order 42(6) applies and there can be no further amendment on or after the seventh day. If the Chair reaches that conclusion, I suggest that the Chair also say that obviously Citation 353 has no longer any place in Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, standing where it is under amendments to the address. It certainly is clear from that citation that a member may move an amendment up to the time that the final question is put. Therefore there is that direct conflict.

As I say, it would not surprise me to hear the Chair say that Standing Order 42(6) is the applicable Standing Order and there can be no further amendment. However, if that is the conclusion then there must be some direction from the Chair. It certainly would not offend us in the Opposition, nor I dare say those on the Government side, if the Chair made direct reference to Citation 353 and ruled that Standing Order 42(6) prevails and Citation 353 has no effect. I suggest that that kind of statement would have to come from the Chair in the event that we meet future problems of this kind.

Therefore, my suggestion would be that the Chair take the matter under advisement and bring us its ruling on the final day, as did Mr. Speaker Michener. That is how he dealt with the matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): The Chair has listened very attentively to the Hon. Member, as it does regularly, and his words of wisdom and excellent research into the subject. However, the Chair feels that the Hon. Member is making a fundamental error when he talks about Citation 353 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition inasmuch as the citation reads:

Any Member may introduce an amendment up until the moment when the final vote has to be taken.

That is applicable to those situations where an amendment is receivable.

As the Hon. Member himself has said, it is quite clear that Standing Order 42(6) reads:

The motion for an Address in Reply shall not be subject to amendment on or after the seventh day of the said debate.

Today is the seventh day. In the opinion of the Chair, Standing Order 42(6) is very specific and since it has been adopted as recently as a few months ago, the Chair can only suggest to the Hon. Member that the intention of the House was that there would be no amendments proposed on seventh day or after the vote was taken on the sixth day. Therefore Citation 353 would only be applicable up until that particular vote, which has now taken place. Therefore the Chair must rule that Standing Order 42(6) is applicable in this case and the motion is not receivable.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise not for the purpose of questioning that ruling howsoever, though it would have, in my view, been advisable to consider it. We are still left with the residual problem of Citation 353 and Standing Orders 42(5) and 42(6). Citation 353 says nothing about the final vote being receivable. It says:

Any Member may introduce an amendment up until the moment when the final vote has to be taken.

The final vote in one interpretation is that which your ruling has just placed on it. The other interpretation is that the final vote referred to in Citation 353 is that final vote referred to in our present Standing Order 42(5), which states:

On the eighth of the said days, at fifteen minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment, unless the said debate be previously concluded, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the main motion.

My contention is that the other interpretation is that the final vote referred to in Citation 353 is the final vote on this debate, which does not take place until Thursday. I urge the Chair to take that obvious conflict into consideration and to rule on that aspect, which is a different aspect from the point of order that I raised.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): I have ruled that I cannot accept the amendment. However, the Chair has a suggestion to make. In all of these matters, the Chair is obviously trying to interpret the will of the House and is very conscious of the need also to interpret the will of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. But the Chair is also under the impression that it was not the intention, when these rules were adopted, that amendments be proposed on this seventh day and the Chair reads that particular Standing Order 42(6) as being very specific.

Since there are several points of difficulty, the Chair can only suggest that when issues such as this arise an effort is made to activate the work of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections so that the Chair can have a better idea of what is really the intent of the House. This is not the only point that has arisen in the past. I suggest to the Hon. Member that it is probably better to have a debate in the Committee and bring it back to the Chair so that the Chair can interpret what really is the will of the House. At the moment, the Chair can only rule that Standing Order 42(6) is very specific and an amendment cannot be accepted.

Mr. David Weatherhead (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne on December 7, 1983 the Government went into some detail regarding pension reform. It stated that its number one priority is to reduce poverty among the aged and that it is committed to increase the guaranteed income supplement for the single pensioners. It is also committed to strengthening both public and private pension plans so that Canadians can be better assured of security, dignity and fulfilment in retirement. In particular, the Government in this Throne Speech promised to improve the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act with respect to coverage, vesting, portability, survivor benefits, benefit protection and mandatory splitting of pension credits, and to discuss with the