

He has an outstanding record in the life of Newfoundland and of Canada and achieved the great eminence of becoming the Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Mr. Williams spent the whole of World War II in naval service, carrying on the great tradition of Newfoundlanders with respect to the sea. I also know well his family and, in particular his daughter, Councillor Wendy Williams, who started a career in public life.

I would like to extend to Mrs. Williams, and members of the family, my condolences and regrets and the gratitude I feel that I knew such a fine character as Fred Williams. I had the pleasure of knowing him and seeing his good work during his many years in working for veterans and veterans affairs.

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### POINT OF ORDER

#### REPLIES TO QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER—SPEAKER'S RULING

**Mr. Speaker:** On Wednesday, September 18, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands rose on a point of order concerning the answers provided by the government to written questions placed on the Order Paper, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 39, and printed in *Debates* of Tuesday, September 17.

He brought to the attention of the House the inclusion in those answers of statements of the amount of time required to prepare each answer and the approximate cost of providing the reply. In his presentation the hon. member noted that such material was extraneous to the question and argued that it should not be included in the answer.

[*Translation*]

At the time, very helpful interventions were made by the Government House Leader and his Parliamentary Secretary, as well as the hon. members for South West Nova and for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

[*English*]

Standing Order 39 states the procedure for dealing with Questions on the Order Paper. The portion of the

### *Speaker's Ruling*

Standing Order relevant to the present situation reads as follows and I quote:

—in putting any such question or in replying to the same no argument or opinion is to be offered, nor any facts stated, except so far as may be necessary to explain the same; and in answering any such question the matter to which the same refers shall not be debated.

In reviewing the provisions of the Standing Order as well as its history, it is interesting to note that generally the problems with this rule which have arisen in the past have been with the wording and nature of questions, rather than with answers.

[*Translation*]

This is why the Clerk of the House is charged with the task of examining notices of questions to ensure that they meet the requirements of Standing Order 39(1) before they are placed on the Notice Paper. They are scrutinized as to the correctness of their form and content.

[*English*]

As noted in the annotated Standing Orders on page 126, the principles guiding the Clerk are that no argument or opinion is to be offered nor any irrelevant fact stated in the question. This is ensured the primary purpose of such questions as stated in the Standing Orders, that is, the seeking of information from the ministry relating to public affairs.

[*Translation*]

The requirements that questions presented offer no argument or opinion, nor any other facts except as may be necessary, were extended to the replies to questions in 1906. This was done expressly to ensure that the process remained an exchange of information rather than becoming an opportunity for debate.

[*English*]

Therefore, in the present circumstances, since the type of information referred to by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is not germane to the information requested, I would ask the hon. government House leader and his parliamentary secretary to review carefully the replies provided by the ministry to be published in the *Debates* to ensure that, in future, all such answers conform to the provisions of Standing Order 39.