

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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POINT OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I believe during Question Period one of our colleagues opposite, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, was given the opportunity to pose a question of a minister of the Crown. I believe this is in breach of the Standing Orders.

In bringing this to the attention of the Chair, I am wondering if the Chair will vigorously enforce the rules and not allow this to happen again, nor to allow this to be a precedent in the future.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond raises a matter which I hope would not occur again. It was an oversight. It has been well established in the House—

Some hon. members: No, no.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. parliamentary secretary seeking the floor?

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to express a couple of thoughts on this. First of all, I think there is a long-standing tradition of the House that parliamentary secretaries do not ask questions of the minister or the ministry for which they have a responsibility.

However, if one looks at Beauchesne's there is clearly room for a parliamentary secretary from time to time to act as a member responsible for a particular constituency which he or she represents and therefore should have the opportunity from time to time to ask a question.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, clearly the hon. member opposite has it wrong. When one is appointed as a parliamentary secretary one takes an oath of secrecy for that department and also for all other agencies of the Government of Canada.

If the hon. member in question who is a diligent member of this House wishes to raise a particular concern affecting his constituency, he has the opportuni-

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ty to do that in other avenues, whether that be in caucus or whether that be under the provisions of Standing Order 31.

However, I suggest the hon. member does not have the right as a parliamentary secretary to pose questions on the floor of the House of Commons to ministers of the Crown. That right is for members of the opposition and for members on the government side. We are seeing, all too frequently, too many members on the opposite sides given the opportunity to pose questions to the detriment of this side.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond has raised a point relating to a parliamentary secretary asking a question. The hon. parliamentary secretary, speaking for the government, says that there is authority in Beauchesne that would permit the parliamentary secretary to raise a question if it relates to his own particular riding. I will consider that and I will reply as soon as I can to the House.

The general rule though is set out in Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, sixth edition, page 122, paragraph 413 under "Questions by Parliamentary Secretaries":

413. Those such as Parliamentary Secretaries who are clothed with the responsibility of answering for the Government ought not to use the time of the Question Period for the privilege of asking questions of the Government.

With respect to the matter raised by the hon. parliamentary secretary, I will consider it and I will return to the House.

I am now in some difficulty. I know that there are some points of order. We also have some questions of privilege which take precedence over them.

I think we should turn to a question of privilege of which I was given notice by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I gave notice yesterday—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona is rising on a point of order. I thought I had suggested to the House that I should take the questions of privilege, which come before points of order. I wonder if the hon. member could wait until I can get to it.

Mr. Blaikie: On a point of order.