

Urban Affairs

hon. members wish to propose a motion under Standing Order 43 they should be satisfied with making a brief explanation. I would invite the co-operation of all hon. members to respect the spirit of that rule by limiting their submissions to the House to a very brief explanation. I suggest to the hon. member for Hamilton West that this is what he has done to this point, and I do not think any purpose would be served by pursuing the matter further.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): On the point of order that Your Honour has raised, Your Honour is quite correct, but during the course of proceedings in the House a day or two ago I attempted to make use of the provisions of Standing Order 68 and Your Honour reminded me that because that order had not been made use of it has probably expired. I think it must be our course on this side to ensure that such rules are not lost through atrophy.

Mr. Speaker: That is quite obvious. I would think that the use we have been making of this Standing Order during recent weeks indicates that the Standing Order is still acceptable in the sense that it is the type of Standing Order that can be made use of. I do not want to make things difficult for the hon. member for Hamilton West. If he has further comments to make they can be made, with the usual caution by the Chair. I would certainly allow him to continue.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It was not my intention to circumvent the rules of the House, nor was it my intention to take the time of the House unnecessarily. I think I can say, with a great deal of respect to the Chair, that the problem I have posed is one of great concern to all Canadians. Perhaps it can be put down to my inexperience with the rules, but I have followed the rules and I would hope that the Speaker would realize that my intention was sincere. Of course it is unfortunate—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's hope is well-founded, I can assure him. I thought that, as I always do, it was my duty to remind hon. members that under Standing Order 43 the only explanation that can be made is regarding urgency and it has to be as brief as possible. I am sure all hon. members will agree with me, upon reflection, that we should

be careful not to revert to the situation we had previously under Standing Order 26 which was not quite conducive to effective, efficient and orderly debate. I hope we will not get ourselves involved in that situation. I am not suggesting that we have at any time up until now, but I think it may be useful to bring this point to the attention of the House from time to time.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would think it would be helpful to hon. members if Your Honour would make clear what your concern is. The wording of Standing Order 43 is perfectly clear. It says "that in case of urgent and pressing necessity explained by the mover" an hon. member can, by unanimous consent, move a motion. I take it Your Honour is concerned about the length of the explanation—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think the hon. member is making the point now. What I am worried about is that we could have a lengthy explanation that would in effect be a speech rather than an explanation in support of the motion. That is what I am hoping to prevent, for the benefit of all members of the House.

● (2:20 p.m.)

I have often said it is difficult for the Chair to determine what brevity is. We do not all have the same standards. The Chair always hopes that hon. members will observe brevity in the sense that they will be brief rather than long. At the same time I think that an hon. member who moves this type of motion would feel that he is entitled to have some kind of leniency in proceeding somewhat longer than the Chair may wish. As the hon. member knows, my concern is in connection with the possible extension of such remarks. I am sure that hon. members will keep this in mind as they have in the past and as they no doubt have this afternoon.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I know all hon. members want to be guided by your wishes in the matter. We all agree that explanations should be brief, but some explanation is necessary. I contend that both explanations which have been given have not been longer than necessary to explain the motions being introduced.