

Routine Proceedings

Period is to elicit information. Surely, government members can elicit information in their weekly caucuses. Caucus, which is the rock of democracy, can provide government members with the necessary information they need.

That argument does not hold much water. Nevertheless, we wish to proceed, but we would like to have those statistics that I have referred to.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary West, who probably cannot resist responding.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, we are negotiating on the floor of the Chamber. I would like to signal to the Liberal House leader that we would be glad to send some of our cabinet ministers to their caucus, provided that we could take the hour and spend it on Government Orders. We would be happy to make that change.

Mr. Speaker: As your Speaker, I want to express my appreciation for the assistance extended to me this morning in this brief discussion.

I want to say to the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond that I spent a great deal of time in opposition, and of course I was always a model of decorum. Perhaps times have changed, but I have to confess to hon. members that there were times when I was on my feet knowing perfectly well what the information was; my object was more to point out that information on behalf of my constituents and in the public interest of my country.

• (1230)

However, I am very intrigued at the suggestion of the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond that Question Period is to elicit information, and I think that we might be able to discuss that matter among all of the members.

I think perhaps it might be helpful if the initiative which has been taken by the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond were to be pursued through perhaps an initial discussion with the House leaders, and perhaps others, on the question—which is a very, very sensible request—of statistics. I want to say to the hon. member that I believe that would be helpful. The Table will make that information available.

Quite frankly, I welcome the initiative taken by the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond because, as hon. members know and as I remarked the other day, there is a lot of competition in this House now for questions. More, perhaps, than there ever has been, partly because there are more members but there are also other reasons.

We want to do what is in the public interest and we want to do what is right for all members of the House. I accept what the hon. member for Calgary West has pointed out, that there are a lot of private members on the government side who often feel that they do not have an adequate chance to put questions in Question Period.

Again I remind hon. members that those of us who spent quite a long time in opposition do have an understanding of the difficulties to which the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond and others have alluded.

I want to thank the hon. members. I thank the hon. member for Cape Breton—Richmond and the others who have intervened. I would hope that an initial meeting could be held as soon as possible, and I certainly would be prepared to co-operate in every way to answer the needs of all the hon. members. I suppose it will not come as any surprise if I indicated that I, too, have some views as to how we could make Question Period more effective.

I thank the hon. members.

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PETITIONS

CANADA POST

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition with respect to post offices. It is a petition with over 300 signatories from Nova Scotia who are concerned that this government's attitude towards post offices is strictly profit-motivated. While this government has made well over \$150 million in profits, it has continued to close post offices, both rural and urban. They are particularly concerned about one post office at 7183 Quinpool Road in Halifax.

The petitioners call upon this government to improve the service of Canada Post and to instruct the government to abandon its policy of closing rural post