

Point of Order

on has been a matter of some discussion. We have been discussing at the House leaders' level.

There are some things about Question Period that we need to look into. We should certainly look at the question of whether it is appropriate to have Question Period fully scripted by the opposition and without, on the counterpart, having the question of notice as they do in the United Kingdom.

Virtually every minister who is not out of the city is sitting here waiting and not knowing whether there is going to be a question or not. There is an enormous amount of preparation that goes into it. I wonder if that is an appropriate use of the taxpayers' resources that it carry on.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Andre: There is the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood heckling from his seat again after saying he does not do that and that he behaves well.

Maybe that is something we should be looking at. The solution to the problem according to the opposition is just to have a longer Question Period. Admittedly that is the most entertaining time of the day and about the only time we see a lot of people in the House. I wonder if that is the best way to serve the taxpayers of this country who are paying our salaries. Are we here to entertain? Are we here to inform? Are we here to keep the government in check through questions?

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Andre: There is the member for Broadview—Greenwood heckling again from his seat. He is constantly heckling.

I think this is something that as House leaders we should discuss. As far as I am concerned everything is on the table.

Mr. Thompson: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, you indicated that I was not in my seat. We have three names on the so-called list to which the member from Nova Scotia referred. I was number three on that list. In fact number two on the list did not have a chance to ask his question. We had 30 questions in this House today. On this side of the House we had one single question.

It has nothing to do with me being in my seat. It has a whole lot to do with how many questions we on this side of the House are allowed to ask. In all due fairness, we did not have that opportunity today and I object to that strongly.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I can show the hon. member the list as I have it. On the government side it was the number two person who was recognized. At one point he was the only one who rose.

I think I have answered this. I do agree and realize that today there was only one question from the government side. Some days there are three and some days there are two. It all depends. The Speaker does whatever is possible. It depends on the length of the questions and on the length of the answers. There are 45 minutes. I think in 45 minutes when 28 or 29 questions are put we have divided the time fairly adequately.

I am sorry the hon. member could not put to the minister the very important and interesting question that I am sure he had today. Hopefully it will be done during the next Question Period. It is very difficult for the person in the chair to decide or to choose. It has been very difficult in the last little while.

We have had a motion before the House on decorum. It asked all kinds of things of the person who was occupying the chair. It sometimes appears from the floor of the House to be very easy to make all the right decisions. I can assure you that all occupants of the chair are doing their best to be fair and to be just.

There are problems with Question Period and I will be the first one to admit that fact. All chair occupants would welcome guidance from hon. members. There is a House management committee, and I think the conduct of hon. members during Question Period could be a subject that is well within its mandate to discuss. That committee may wish to discuss it again and get together and make a formal request. I am sure the Speaker and myself would be delighted to talk with them and come to a better understanding. It is very difficult after every single Question Period to have one member or another saying: "I did not have my chance to speak".

While we were discussing the motion yesterday a member rose and said that if a question is put and a supplemental does not seem necessary the Speaker should recognize somebody else. That is something I did a couple of weeks ago and a person from the hon.