

Time Allocation

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I apologize to the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom). I did not realize that the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) had decided to take his seat or to answer a question.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the issue during the bell-ringing episode was with respect to this very institution. That is the difference.

Mr. Waddell: You supported the oil companies.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): The issue on which the NDP supported us, in their good sense, incidentally, concerned the survival of this institution with regard to legislation being brought forward.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton permit another short question? I want to ask, in a very non-partisan way, why the Conservative Party and he himself in particular—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. A point of privilege is being raised by the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier). I have no choice but to interrupt the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway who is speaking on a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I want to draw your attention to the fact that we are into the same quagmire in which we were this morning. We are now getting questions from the NDP, who just came back into the House, addressed to the Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) when he, indeed, had the floor. You did not ask me or anyone else for unanimous consent for questions to be put to the Member for Nepean-Carleton. I refuse to have an ongoing debate on this motion.

Mr. Deans: How long can we speak with the Conservatives alongside of you?

• (1600)

Mr. Gauthier: Get up and take the floor, Deans, if you want to speak. Wait until I am finished.

I object to this kind of procedure, which is completely wrong, completely frustrates the whole spirit of our new rules, and which will just make the NDP look sillier than it did before.

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I want to say on behalf of my colleagues that we in the New Democratic Party will not abuse the rules. We are using these rules to protect the pensioners of Canada. That is what we are doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I want to spend about one minute discussing the Bill because, as the Minister has indicated, much has already been said about the Bill, but I want to make two quick points. At this point in our history, when so many Canadians, particularly pensioners, are in a state of misery, it is wrong for any Government in this land with a sense of decency to take a

whack at the pensioners, to reduce their benefits by whatever amount. However, I say that it is doubly wrong, the immorality is compounded, when a Gouvernement takes a group of pensioners who in fact have negotiated a contract, creates a fund to give them special benefits to which they contribute, and then denies that benefit to those pensioners. I repeat, it is compounding the immorality, and that is what the Government is doing.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Broadbent: In this context, I want to say that the hypocrisy of the Conservative Party could hardly be exceeded in terms of what it is doing today. We have said in this debate that last spring, in June, when the budget came down, the then Minister of Finance made it very clear that anyone supporting the six and five program would also support a reduction in pensions, a whack away at recipients of Family Allowances, and curtail in general incomes of public servants. By moral admonition, the Government hoped, with Conservative support, there would be a curtailment of wage and salary increases of ordinary workers throughout this land. I say to the Conservatives that the Government made it clear last June that the pensioners would be affected. The Conservatives rose in this House in August and voted for the six and five program.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): We voted against that budget.

Mr. Broadbent: Now, hypocritically, they oppose its clear implication.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I want to address the immediate issue which is before the House this afternoon. Our House leader rose because he knows that on Tuesday cheques will be sent out in good faith to men and women who have contributed to pension funds and who are now entitled to an escalation in their pension increase fully equivalent to the increase in the cost of living, to which they are morally and legally entitled at this minute, throughout Canada. Our House leader rose because he is aware that even if we in this House could hold the measure up this afternoon until 6 o'clock or beyond 6 p.m. so that the required two hours of closure debate would not take place, at least the pensions which would go out on Tuesday would reflect some sense of morality and justice because they would be fully indexed. I say with all seriousness that because today the Liberals were supported by the Conservatives, the pensioners will be cheated on Tuesday night. That is the reality.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Broadbent: In this context, I want to say that all that it would take—

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): You were not here!