

Business of the House

Madam Speaker: I did want to comment on what the Minister said about possible abuses of the time allocated to Statements by Ministers. I was distracted by the number of Members who were eager to take the floor at that time. I think it is fair to remind the House that the time taken under Statements by Ministers by the different intervenors in the House is determined by the Speaker. The Speaker goes by rule-of-thumb. Depending on how much time the Minister takes, the other statements are more or less related to that period.

The Speaker has interrupted some Members who have taken more time than the Minister had taken to make the statement. If my memory is correct, we have not had any exceptions to that. Questions then follow. That, too, is regulated at the discretion of the Speaker. We have had periods of two hours for questions, including the statement. Depending on the number of Members who wanted to ask questions, I did not think at that time that was excessive. However, if the time to be allocated to these kinds of statements is to be discussed and negotiated between the Parties, I think that would make my job even easier.

• (1530)

[Translation]

Mr. Claude-André Lachance (Rosemont): Madam Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to a comment made during the previous debate by the Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), a comment he may wish to withdraw, since it is more or less a false accusation, and I do not think that is in keeping with the Rules of the House. He said that the Members on the Committee had bowed to the wishes of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) in the debate on the number of Members now on the Committees and on the Striking Committee's report. I should like to point out to the Hon. Member and to Members on both sides of the House, that the Committee has decided not to intervene in this difference of opinion between the Parliamentary House Leaders, and if I misunderstood his comments, perhaps the Hon. Member would like to withdraw them.

[English]

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, in the best interest of the work of that committee, I think I should make it abundantly clear that if the Member has that interpretation of what I said, it is quite wrong. I was referring throughout to the Striking Committee and not to the Special Committee of which he is a member.

Mr. Cosgrove: Madam Speaker, a propos of the discussion between the Government House leader and the House leader for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I would like to point out that the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn), a Conservative Member, indicated in Parliament today, presumably with the approval of his House leader, the agreement of that Party to deal expeditiously with Bill C-142, which

was introduced in order to bring some security to depositors in organizations covered by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation. It is impossible for this Government to deal with that item and send it on to committee if we cannot even agree to find a forum under which to debate the issue of striking those committees. I would have thought that in the interest of those people looking for additional security—

Madam Speaker: Order. The Hon. Minister is into debate. I think we all realize that the Parties now want to negotiate some kind of solution to that particular problem. I understand the Hon. Minister's desire to have that report debated promptly, but I think it will probably happen if the Parties agree.

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, in his comments, the Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) doubted the Government had the right to put motions on Wednesday, since it is a Private Members' Day. I want to make it clear that we do not agree at all with this view, that a motion can be put on a Wednesday just as on any other day on which Government Orders are dealt with, that there is no basis for this view and especially, there is nothing in the Rules or parliamentary procedure to support this reasoning. Therefore, we reserve the right to put our motions whenever it is necessary to do so. I agreed to postpone the debate on the Striking Committee's report until a later date, probably not later than next Wednesday, because the Hon. Member's reaction took me by surprise. We shall discuss the matter later, and I hope we will be able to agree, and otherwise, we reserve the right to call this motion on a Wednesday, either tomorrow or next week.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. Member did not raise the question. He said that he was thinking of raising it tomorrow, because he had some doubts as to the Government's right to cancel the Private Members' hour, but he did not really raise the question.

[English]

Mr. Nielsen: That is entirely correct, and I should hasten also to correct the misapprehension the Government House leader might have with respect to what I said. I do not question the Government's right to give notice on a Wednesday; what I question is the right to allow a Government order of the day, such as that notice would trigger, to displace a private Bill.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Let us not have that debate now. We will have it in due course.

Mr. Nielsen: It was not a debate; I was simply correcting him.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Well, it is a hypothetical situation for the time being.

Mr. Nielsen: His statement was not.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, the Government House leader mentioned it was difficult to find Members who wanted their