

Point of Order—Mr. Nielsen

this session, and I must tell him that I see no question of privilege, and I cannot hear him any longer.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. NIELSEN—EARLY RINGING OF BELLS BEFORE SITTINGS

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I have a point of order having to do with the function of the House. I think it is trite to say that all hon. members should be treated equally. I know hon. members over there have treated this question of privilege as being frivolous, but it is quite serious. On a question of order, the practice of many years has been that those bells have been rung for two reasons: one, to call a quorum; two, to call division. The bells were established when this place was established. This was the only building in the parliamentary precincts that housed hon. members. We now have the Confederation Building, the South Block, the West Block and the East Block.

All that the hon. member is suggesting to the Chair is that perhaps, since this place must commence its proceedings at predetermined times, those bells should start at a time—

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Nielsen:—when all hon. members have equal warning. It may well be that the Chair, the Speaker, who is the only person who sees the clocks in this place, might afford all hon. members equal treatment by commencing those bells at a time which would permit all hon. members to have sufficient warning to get here at the times when this place is obliged to sit by the Standing Orders. It is not a question of—either that, or do away with the bells.

An hon. Member: Different hours!

Mr. D. M. Collette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, with all due respect to my friend, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) who has long service in this House, he has offered, a moment ago, one of the most infantile arguments I have ever heard in my years in the House. I am parliamentary secretary of the government House leader.

Some hon. Members: Yea!

Mr. Collette: My office is located in the Confederation Building. Surely hon. members know that the House reconvenes at eight o'clock following the dinner break, and that one makes provision. As parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, I know that I must leave my office perhaps five or ten minutes earlier than that other hon. member to be here at eight o'clock. I am sure that when *Hansard* is read many years hence, when we see the steps to which the opposition has resorted to delay debate in this House, those people who read *Hansard* at that particular point in time will be incredulous. I find it equally incredulous that we have spent, I suppose, 25 minutes since the bells stopped this evening—

An hon. Member: You are filibustering.

An hon. Member: No. 24.

Mr. Collette:—on the point of order of the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes), who should know better, but what disturbs me even more is that we have listened to the interjection of a learned hon. member who has been here for 23 years, the hon. member for Yukon—

Mr. Nielsen: Twenty-three and one half.

Mr. Collette:—who argues that there should be some kind of a preferential bell. The electorate of Canada—

An hon. Member: What's a preferential bell?

Mr. Collette: Madam Speaker, the electorate of Canada sends us here to behave as adults to legislate in the name of all Canadians. If one cannot organize one's time so as to make sure that we are here at eight o'clock—if one's building is located just off the Hill, as it is with the Confederation Building—then we really have no business being here.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Collette: I have been here for five days, and I have listened to the delaying and the obstructionist tactics of the hon. members opposite.

Madam Speaker: Order. The point of order is getting a bit long, and I think the hon. member for Yukon gave me my cue in this particular question of privilege raising a point of order. He did say that the bells have been traditionally used in this House to call a quorum and for division. If the hon. members objected to their ringing, if the Standing Order did not oblige us to ring the bells at eight o'clock, that would be one thing. But the Standing Order is quite clear that at six o'clock p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Mr. Speaker is to leave the chair until eight o'clock. That is sufficient warning to all hon. members to come here at eight o'clock. If they are located a little farther from the House of Commons, it is up to them to allow more time. We can do nothing about it, just as we can do nothing about ensuring that they will not miss their train if they live farther away than somebody else and they leave five minutes too late. There is nothing the Chair can do about that.

The hon. member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon).

Mr. Cossitt: On the same point of order.

Madam Speaker: No, I have just—

An hon. Member: The point of order has been dealt with.

Madam Speaker: I have disposed of this point of order.

Mr. Cossitt: Well, Madam Speaker, I raise—

Madam Speaker: Is the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville (Mr. Cossitt) rising on a new point of order?