

Points of Order

I am wondering if you would check the "blues" today of the hon. member for Nickel Belt who had six sentences of preamble, making no representation, asking no question. I think you will find in Beauchesne's that is out of order. Would you kindly check?

EXTENSION OF QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, concerning the point made by my hon. friend and in the spirit of the question, I want to say right now that an opportunity should be provided to a number of people who do not make Question Period.

May I suggest that starting tomorrow we extend Question Period for an extra half hour to allow more people to participate in this process?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I just want to set the record straight that during discussions last year with both parties in terms of rule changes, I offered opposition members an extra 15 minutes a day. They turned it down.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to explain that what the government House leader has said is not true. He should have explained that it was part of a large package.

I would like to say that what he has indicated—if people are listening in or watching they will get the wrong impression—was never offered. I am suggesting that starting today I am prepared to offer at least half an hour, if not more, to add to Question Period every day.

ALLOCATION OF TIME DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I heard the parliamentary secretary make his suggestion that somehow there was something wrong with Question Period when members on the other side could not get recognized for questions.

Part of the reason why they and the rest of us do not get recognized for questions every day is the windy answers we get from ministers of the Crown.

I want to make it very clear that the Deputy Prime Minister gave a four-minute answer to the question of the Leader of the Opposition. I have never heard so much drivel in four minutes in this House in my life.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to address that point of order very quickly by suggesting to the House that yes, from time to time answers on this side are too long and from time to time questions from that side are too long.

Perhaps what we can do later at our committee this afternoon is come up with a solution that would be acceptable to both sides of this House.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, in order to facilitate the concerns of the members opposite, perhaps they would concur with the suggestion which has been made by my colleague, the leader of the NDP in this House.

Perhaps we could extend, if there is consensus, this particular Question Period for another 10 or 15 minutes to give members on both sides an opportunity to ask more questions. I am sure members of my party would concur with that particular resolution.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I know we are usually chastised for negotiations on the floor of the House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cooper: I made a serious offer a couple of moments ago. We have a meeting of the management committee in 53 or 54 minutes. I hope to start on time. Perhaps at that time we can come up with a really good solution for all members of this House.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Chair could give some direction. There was a motion to seek unanimous consent of the House. I did not hear anybody deny that, so I am assuming that we are going ahead with a continuance of Question Period. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: I might be getting into pretty dangerous ground if I assume that.

The hon. member has indicated that there is a motion before the House to continue with Question Period. Is there agreement?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: Yes.