

In addition to the question period, private members' bills, and private members' resolutions, there are two ways for members to make points and make them quickly. One is by the use of Standing Order 43. The other is by transferring their questions to the late show.

I do not see what all the fuss is about. These things are good. I admit they get abused. Sometimes speeches are made in the late show period that are speeches rather than questions. At least the time limit there of seven minutes polices the proposition.

My experience is that the Chair seems to like the fact there can be a late show. He knows that if he sits a member down as far as his questions are concerned, that member can apply to have them put on the late show. Good use is made of that.

At times there are abuses of Standing Order 43. When my colleagues bring their Standing Order 43 motions to me to look at them, the usual practice is for me to strike out a paragraph because they are too long. My main reason for doing that is so that somebody else will have an opportunity to get one presented.

There are abuses, but let us not have that interpreted as though it is something contrary to the whole spirit of parliament or that it is something wrong because we have Standing Order 43. That order was not built that way in 1867, but it has developed that way. It is an opportunity for members to make points. They hope to get some publicity, to be noticed by the press, the media, or by people watching television.

We are here to make our points of view known. This is not a one party situation where the party that won the election runs the show for the next four, five, or six years, or however long this government plans to stay. This is a place where the importance of the opposition and the importance of private members are very great. We express that importance not just by sitting here and voting on matters that come before us, but by getting our ideas across.

I am glad we have the question period. I am sorry more members cannot get in. I admit if we lengthened it to an hour or an hour and a half, it would become dull. I am glad we have the late show for members to make their points, and I am glad we have Standing Order 43.

If anything comes of this discussion, I hope it will be that members shorten the preambles to their motions under the Standing Order 43. I suppose the reason the minister did not quote some of my motions is because I make them without a preamble. I believe you can say what you want in the motion.

I admit sometimes there is a bit of abuse. However, I do not know why the minister adopted the cry-baby attitude that they cannot answer. They can say no.

Mr. MacEachen: There are ten paragraphs of false allegations on the record. "No" does not answer that. That is the point.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): If there is a long paragraph containing certain things with which the minister

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agrees and one thing with which he does not agree, he can say no to the whole works.

Mr. MacEachen: That is not debate.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The minister says that is not debate. If the minister wants debate, he can say yes and we will have a debate on the matter.

Mr. MacEachen: One of your men may say no, as one of the opposition members said today. I have been living in the House. I know what is going on here.

● (1612)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is all right, Mr. Speaker, I still have the floor. This debate may amount to something yet. But it strikes me the whole business of raising these motions under Standing Order 43 is not bad, not against the tone and purpose of parliament, and I was glad at least that the government House leader did not propose that the order be abolished. As a matter of fact, he did not propose any amendment. He suggested more self-policing of it. Mind you, I think he went a little far when he said he was going to get up on points of order. Mr. Speaker might have something to say about that. After all, Your Honour simply listens to the motion before putting the question whether or not there is unanimous consent. Once in a while, as the minister did the other day, an hon. member raises a point of order and so we have a discussion such as we are having today.

If there is any value to this discussion it is that members generally will look more carefully at the motions they seek to present. But I urge strongly that no attempt be made to cut out altogether the presentations of these motions. We did the right thing when we changed the rules, when we set aside a special time for the presentation of motions under S.O. 43. The person who benefits most from that decision is Mr. Speaker, because when motions under Standing Order 43 were made after the question period under motions, they could go on all afternoon—Mr. Speaker found it difficult to cut them off, yet he had to cut them off somewhere. Now that they are dealt with in a prescribed period from about 2.07 to 2.15 p.m., Mr. Speaker knows that even though some of them are abusive of the order and not quite in line, come 2.15 p.m. it will all be over. So I have to question where this discussion is taking us. I wondered if it was taking us anywhere, but maybe it will help us do our own policing of the motions we make under the standing order.

Now I turn to the subject upon which the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton spent a fair amount of time. I agree with him that, this is an important issue but I do not think the simplistic solution he put forward will solve it. He argued for quite a while about the fact that we have things that run into the dinner hour and we hurdle the dinner hour. We may hurdle it as far as debate is concerned but, we do not cancel the dinner hour. When we reach the point at which the book says that at six o'clock we take dinner, we do not cancel it because there is something interesting or vital under discussion. We adjourn. Similarly, when we reach five o'clock and