

Point of Order

With respect to the Criminal Code, charges would be laid by the provincial attorneys general. I am happy to draw the matter to their attention. The hon. member and all members of this House are free to do so as well. I would encourage them to do so since they have had the benefit of looking at the material, and I have not.

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POINT OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, to the best of my knowledge the government side had one question today during Question Period. This is a recurring theme in Question Period. We are not given our right as members of this House to ask questions.

Madam Speaker, I think if you examine the questions that I have asked in this House since I have been here you will find that they have been as tough as any questions from the opposition side.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Carleton—Charlotte does not want to question the right of the Speaker to recognize or not recognize people. The hon. member will sit down, please.

I would also tell the hon. member that on three different occasions during Question Period I did look to recognize him and he was not in his seat.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I would like to speak on the matter which has been raised by my colleague. If he wishes to discuss it with the government House leader perhaps there would be unanimous consent in the House in order to accommodate the hon. member to raise his question and thereby to have other members from this side and I would presume from the NDP.

Perhaps we could extend Question Period today to about 12.20 in order to accommodate those members who have such pressing questions they wish to put to ministers of the Crown.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I know in your usual fashion you are seeking a resolution to what may be a problem. I do not think it is a problem. I know that in our own

caucus we had a number of people who were on our list who had pressing questions today.

I want to join with my colleague and say that we would be more than willing today, and perhaps virtually almost any day, to extend Question Period for 20 minutes to allow a number of individuals on all sides of the House to have a chance to ask more questions.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Madam Speaker, I am not going to get into the game of extending Question Period. I think that perhaps we should sometimes, but I really do think the Speaker's duty and responsibility is to recognize all in this House as equals.

After the lead questions are asked and the answers given in some form or other, thereafter there is an incumbent duty of members to stand so that the Speaker has a chance to find out who is trying to get the attention of the Chair. We should not get into the pattern that I am afraid we have fallen into. This is when other occupants of the chair—not you, Madam Speaker—seem to look at a piece of paper, and I would not want to suggest that there were names on it, and only those names are recognized.

This is a far cry from the way Question Period should be. Quite frankly the thing is as dull as dishwater in so many cases. When you get a good question and someone has a proper supplementary sometimes there is not flexibility on the part of the Chair to recognize that supplementary. That is when Question Period in this House used to live with a little more vibrance than it does today.

• (1210)

Most of the ministers have already gone, and I understand that is the usual ploy at this particular time on a point of order. But in future Question Periods this crazy list should get out of the way of the Speaker's eye after you have the lead so that there is a little more to and fro both from the government side and from the opposition side. That will bring some sense to this procedure.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I hesitate to get involved in this interesting debate. The issue of Question Period and general behaviour in the House and how we conduct business and so