

*Point of Order—Mr. Nielsen*

Transport (Mr. Bockstael), who today during the period assigned for motions under Standing Order 43 moved such a motion. I believe you will recall, Madam Speaker, that your predecessor, almost immediately after assuming office, took the position, upon which he expounded at some length in the House, that he would not entertain the previous questionable practice which had given rise to considerable objection prior to his assuming the Chair, of parliamentary secretaries participating in the question period.

Mr. Speaker Jerome gave at least three reasons for taking this action. One reason was that the parliamentary secretaries were in receipt of emoluments over and above those ordinarily received by members of Parliament. Another reason was that a parliamentary secretary takes an oath somewhat similar to the oath taken by cabinet members. Perhaps the most important reason was that parliamentary secretaries were privy to matters that were the responsibility of the individual departments and, beyond that, privy to matters which were the subject of general cabinet discussions. Mr. Speaker Jerome took the position that for these and other reasons he would not entertain any further participation by parliamentary secretaries in the question period. As far as I am aware, this has not happened thus far in this session.

**Mr. Evans:** It was not during question period.

**Mr. Nielsen:** If the hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) will be patient for a moment, he will hear my argument with respect to the participation of parliamentary secretaries in the period reserved for motions under Standing Order 43. There is no distinction, in my submission. I do not recollect, nor have I had the time since the matter arose today to look at the precedents, whether Mr. Speaker Jerome dealt with the period reserved for motions under Standing Order 43. He may not have done so, but I am making the submission now that there is no difference between parliamentary secretaries participating in the period reserved for motions under Standing Order 43 and participating in question period.

I make my submission on the same basis and the same arguments which have been outlined. For example, it is quite conceivable that a parliamentary secretary may, by virtue of his position, have information which would be unavailable to any other member of Parliament, and as a result be placed in the favoured position with respect to moving a motion under Standing Order 43, in which he would not otherwise find himself. For that reason I submit that you should take the matter under advisement and obtain the counsel of your advisers, Madam Speaker. Hopefully, you can come back to advise us that your position will be along the same lines as that of your predecessor, in other words, that it would not be mete for parliamentary secretaries to engage in the period reserved for motions under Standing Order 43 which, by and large is a period reserved for members of the opposition, any more than it would be proper for them to engage in the question period itself.

● (1600)

**Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, I am glad the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) has raised this question, and I join with him in asking you to review this practice.

I was here in the Thirtieth Parliament when Speaker Jerome made his ruling, both on the participation of parliamentary secretaries in question period and in the time reserved for motions under Standing Order 43. At the time I think it caused a lot of concern and reservation on the part of parliamentary secretaries, not so much on the ruling directed toward participation in question period because I believe Speaker Jerome was entirely correct that a parliamentary secretary cannot be expected both to answer questions and pose questions at the same time, but because motions under the provisions of Standing Order 43 come under a different section of the routine proceedings of the House. As I understand it, this section was designed to allow every hon. member to rise on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity, especially as it affected a member's constituency.

As hon. members know, the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Bockstael) is one of two Liberal members elected from western Canada. He has deep feelings on the whole question of the debate now under way affecting western Canada. I believe he has every right to express his emotions and feelings, as do members opposite who engaged in the question of privilege raised earlier. Of course, the hon. member for St. Boniface is a parliamentary secretary and he does not have the means in the House to bring those emotions to bear on a regular basis.

To my recollection, during the Thirtieth Parliament Speaker Jerome permitted parliamentary secretaries two or three times to move motions under the provisions of Standing Order 43. At one point he actually broke his own rule, and I believe allowed a parliamentary secretary, who is now the hon. member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore (Mr. Robinson), to ask a question during question period, although it was not directed toward the ministry he was then serving.

Therefore, I would ask you, Madam Speaker, to look into this matter so that we can have a clear ruling. I believe that today was the third occasion on which you have allowed a parliamentary secretary to move a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 43 since this Thirty-second Parliament opened. You allowed the hon. member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon (Mr. Masters) to move a motion under Standing Order 43 the other week.

On behalf of members on this side of the House, I urge that you view the matter concerning the rule under which parliamentary secretaries can participate in the period reserved for motions under Standing Order 43 as a flexible one.

Respecting the question period, I believe the precedents are clear.

**Madam Speaker:** My decision to allow the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Bockstael) to propose a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 43 was based on the Standing Orders and on several precedents. Standing Order 15(2) per-