

intervention. I concur that you have agreed with my colleagues from the New Democratic Party.

From time to time all of us may make a mistake, but I do want to raise with the Chair for possible reflection at another time that the question put by the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam was a supplementary question, and the supplementary question I believe was on an entirely different matter as I understood it.

Mr. Waddell: No.

Mr. Dingwall: The hon. member says no, but perhaps the Chair might want to take that under advisement to see whether or not that was the actual case.

In terms of asking questions on the subject matter which may or may not be before the House, I would hope that the Chair would always give the benefit of the doubt in circumstances such as that to the questioner in that particular case.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would just like to say that you have done an admirable job of pointing out where you yourself were in error, and we all respect you for having done that.

What we are seeking is some statement on your part about the extent to which the government House leader was in error in wrongly citing this procedure as a reason for not answering the question.

You said that the minister is not obliged to answer the question. That is true, but the minister is obliged to either not answer the question or, if he wants to give a reason for not answering the question, to give a reason that is true to the rules of the House and not something which distorts the rules of the House. That is what we want the Chair to say.

Until the Chair says that, that particular sentence by the government House leader stands and stands as a bad precedent and a precedent which distorts the rules of the House. We want the Chair to say otherwise, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not see why this hon. member would raise his voice to me.

Mr. Blaikie: Don't take it personally.

Point of Order

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not see what mistake I have made apart from not knowing that a motion had been passed earlier this day. Even at that, the government could have changed its mind.

An hon. member: But there was a mistake.

Madam Deputy Speaker: You may not agree with the minister's answer and that is the hon. member's prerogative. I fully agree with that, but I did give the benefit of the doubt to the member, as the hon. member was suggesting, and I think that now we should proceed.

This point of order has to end at some point. There is nothing more that the Speaker can do at this time.

An hon. member: A point of order—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have just said that to me this point of order has now been listened to very thoroughly and completely and there is no way that I can change anything at this time.

An hon. member: Let's go to the question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think we will now go to the question.

An hon. member: Point of order—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would really ask that the hon. member find another way of wanting me to change whatever decision I have taken, which is no decision except to go to the question.

Mr. Waddell: On a point of order, Madam Speaker—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am listening to you.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that you want to get on with House business and I appreciate that you heard my point of order. As you know, we are not yelling and so on. We both appreciate that the Speaker is the servant of the House.

We are concerned with some perhaps bad procedure. We think that the minister could simply have said: I am not going to answer your question or some other answer, but instead he raised a technical point that we think is against the orders of the House.

We would ask the Chair and other members of the House to reflect on that, and I will raise this again tomorrow after Question Privilege as a matter of privilege.