

rulings. If he were to come back today I think he would have to correct what he said in 1951, regarding supplementary questions because they are now being asked. He concludes this article by saying:

No doubt as demands made upon the national government for further intervention into economic and social realms increase, there will be a tendency to place more emphasis on the value of the question time procedural technique as a weapon both to embarrass the government and to maintain watch and ward over the political executive and civil service.

The tendency which he foresaw has certainly existed. I want to tell hon. members that the tendency is being accentuated to the point where we are pulling in two different directions. I have my rules of Beauchesne and Bourinot which hon. members expect me to enforce and yet hon. members are pulling in the direction of the practice which exists in the United Kingdom under different rules. Hon. members should not be surprised if I frequently intervene—perhaps in their view unduly but in my view quite rightly—and if I appear in my interventions to be quite drastic but by virtue of the rules I am supposed to enforce I can assure hon. members that I have been so lenient since I have been in office in relation to those rules that I should not be asking hon. members today for anything but their forgiveness.

**An hon. Member:** Granted.

**Mr. Speaker:** Having said that, I simply express the hope that hon. members will look into this problem themselves because I think a problem does exist and the Speaker is put in an impossible position. In view of the situation which has existed some hon. members who have been elected in recent years feel that the practice as it exists today is the right one. They feel that the Speaker is completely off the track when he intervenes on some occasions, and perhaps quite rightly, with the result that we get what I read in this morning's *Montreal Gazette* where this headline appears, "Speaker Blocks PC Query". I am not blocking P.C. or C.C.F. or Liberal queries. I block a question when it is out of order. In this article there is the implication that I intervene unduly. I am not dealing with the point which was raised yesterday concerning the question of the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) because he is not here today. In any event *Hansard* speaks for itself.

I ask hon. members to judge the situation and ask themselves if it is a fair position in which to put their Speaker. That is what I ask them. I have no objection if hon. members want to go in a certain direction,

but they cannot expect me to give them my blessing with the rules that I have to follow. If they want to change them I suggest that they know what procedure to take.

**Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the explanation which has been given will the Prime Minister consider setting up a committee on rules as soon as possible so that the problem may be considered?

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** There was a committee on rules that sat for quite—

**Mr. Knowles:** Ten years.

**Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East):**—a long period and which made recommendations that were approved by the house as recently as last year. I would suggest that we try to conform with those rules as closely as we can. If we find that they are too restrictive no doubt there will be discussions among hon. members as to the advisability of having a committee set up to consider them. The government will place no obstacles in the way of hon. members because it is not the government that determines what should be the rules of the house, it is the membership of the house itself.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might make a suggestion.

**An hon. Member:** A supplementary question.

**Mr. Knowles:** My suggestion arises out of the remarks made by Your Honour. First of all, may I say that I am glad you have raised what might be called a question of privilege on your own behalf. Whatever we may think of your administration of the rules I do not think the press should picture you as an ogre trying to prevent parliament from carrying on with its business.

However, my suggestion is that those who study this matter by reading the citations and references which you have indicated might also read what Sir Edward Fellowes, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.C., Clerk of the House of Commons at Westminster, has said on the matter of questions. His statement is recorded in a summary of the proceedings of the fourth parliamentary course held at Westminster in May, 1955. These proceedings are contained in a mimeographed document which has been made available to all members of this house who are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I shall not take time to read it all, but perhaps I would be permitted to read one or two sentences since Your Honour has already indicated publicly what I said to you privately yesterday.