

Supply

Mr. Watson: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Hon. Minister—

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not want to impinge on the Hon. Member but the spirit of the rules of reform, if we read the third report, was that this question period was primarily designed for people who were perhaps not of the same political mind as the speaker. I stand to be corrected. Perhaps we could refer to the report, but I believe that was the essence of it. I know the Hon. Member for Châteauguay (Mr. Watson) very well. I do not want to impinge on him. If I am wrong, I stand corrected. Another Member of the Committee is here, the House Leader of the New Democratic Party; perhaps he could deal with it. I think that was the intent and purpose of this question period.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. Before recognizing another Hon. Member on this point of order, the first thing I should say is that the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) is quite correct. I will not take this time out of the ten minutes provided for the exchange.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I think that is fair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Committee report indicated that the Chair should give priority during this ten-minute period to Members representing Parties other than that of the Hon. Member who had just spoken. The point of order raised by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton is correct. I thought I would attempt to recognize the four Hon. Members who rose immediately following the Minister's remarks.

Hon. Members will realize that the Chair is also involved in a new procedure. It may be that I should have proceeded to supplementary questions by the Hon. Member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie), but in fairness to the Hon. Member I recognized, I think I will persist in recognizing him for one question and then I will look to the Hon. Member for Rosedale for one or two supplementary questions. All questions and supplementaries are intended by the Committee report to be short and sharp, so we would look to very brief interventions. I also want to recognize Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party. I may have been in error, but I will allow the Hon. Member for Rosedale to ask one or two supplementary questions. Let us proceed in this manner as I learn how we ought best to go.

Mr. Cousineau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is also the principle that each Member of the House will be recognized in an equal manner. I think we must not forget that.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the point of order. Under normal conditions I would agree with the Hon. Member who just made the point, but on the specifics of the ten-minute question period following 20-minute speeches, it was quite clearly the intention of the Committee that to the greatest extent possible—and I am not ruling out that there may be exceptions—questions would be addressed to speakers by Members other than those of their own political Party.

In fact, we dealt with it in exactly that way, pointing out that we did not want to have an exchange between one Member and another simply to highlight the points the speaker wanted to make, or to draw out additional points from the speaker which would enable them to enlarge upon or extend their available time beyond 20 minutes.

I would say to the Hon. Member, without entering into a disagreement with him, that in all matters with the exception of the ten-minute question period we recognize the need to be fair and equitable with all three Parties. But on the ten-minute question period that was not the case, for I think the Chair will no doubt see good and justifiable reasons.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I have already indicated that I think it was the Chair's error to have recognized the Hon. Member to my right. Having done so, however, I think it is unreasonable to deprive that Hon. Member of the question. I will recognize him for one question and I will confirm the remarks made by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton and the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) to the effect that the committee report indicated that this ten-minute period is to be given, in terms of priority, to Members representing Parties other than that of the Hon. Member who just spoke. That is clear and I have indicated that it was my error. Therefore, I will recognize the Hon. Member for Châteauguay (Mr. Watson) for one question and then the Hon. Member for Rosedale.

Mr. Breau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order.

Mr. Cousineau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I will not take the time of this exchange out of the ten-minute question period—that is, the current situation where Hon. Members are rising on points of order—so that those Members who wish to enter into the exchange will have an opportunity to do so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Cousineau: I see that in *Hansard* of Monday, January 17, it says very specifically that backbenchers on the Government side will also be entitled to speak following a speech by a Minister.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I think I should answer that so that there will be no difference between the Committee report and Madam Speaker's comments. I believe the Hon. Member is quoting Madam Speaker in that regard. The point was that when an Hon. Member from either of the Opposition Parties spoke for the 20-minute period, obviously the intent of the Committee report was to give opportunity to Hon. Members on the Government side to use the ten-minute period for an exchange of questions and comment. So there is nothing inconsistent between what Madam Speaker says and what the Committee on Procedure and Organization said.