

Routine Proceedings

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Chair has really heard wonderful arguments today.

I think we should lay it to rest so I may assess the matter and come back.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, my apologies for referring to the NDP party. I do keep referring to the NDP party, and it is because I think of the New Democratic People's party. The fact is that, whatever you call it, they have been acting in a childish and tyrannical fashion, and really have been abusing the rights of both the government and the Official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I want to leave you with three questions that I think need to be considered, since you are considering the four questions that were put on the floor by the NDP House leader.

I think there are three questions that need to be examined because they go to this fundamental principle. First, were the NDP exceeding acceptable standards of behaviour by not allowing debate but instead grandstanding, filibustering and delaying, not only in the committee, but in the House previously. I think they have been doing that. I think the answer to that question is yes.

Second, if their behaviour was abnormal—as it certainly was—then did it not require an unusual response? I think the answer to that question is also yes.

The third question then, is: Does the third party have the right to filibuster, delay and prevent the real opposition from debating, or the government from governing? That is the question that goes to the fundamental principle that the Opposition does have a right to oppose, but the government has a right to govern. That is the very fundamental principle that these characters, in their childish, jackboot tactics and approaches, have forgotten.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I made the statement not too long ago that I felt there really was not a point of order here.

I have listened now to interventions by very many people, and I would just like to spend a minute or two to deal with the substance of the issue. When I first was elected to this Chamber some 11 years ago, I read a lot about it. I read a lot about the precedents of the House of Commons.

It has been a longstanding practice, going back to the beginning of the parliamentary system, that Speakers from time to time make rulings that are not covered in any kind of exact way by the Orders of the Day. The House then can divide on whether or not to uphold the Speaker. Speakers, going back for hundreds of years, have ruled that the tyranny of the minority must be brought to a close, and have submitted that ruling to the Chamber and the majority in the Chamber rules.

That is what happened in committee. It is not the first time it has happened in committee. I suggest to you it will not be the last time. The minority cannot be allowed to hijack the business of the people, to cause extra expense for the people, and on and on and on.

We have dealt, in this Chamber, with the provision of two rules that have to deal with the issue before us today. We have had for many years a closure rule that is put without debate or amendment, and the House divides. That could have been done. We have another form of limiting debate called time allocation. Members will know that this Chamber decided that the maximum length of time for debate on time allocation is two hours in the Chamber.

That party, with its pillows, blankets and bells on their toes debated a time allocation motion for better than 31 hours, 15 times the allowable time in this Chamber, at great cost to the taxpayers of this nation.

• (1340)

Perhaps the Chamber should entertain a motion of appreciation for the chairman of the finance committee for his tolerance as a chairman in protecting the third party, the NDP party—

Mr. Riis: Order.

Mr. Hawkes: —for as many hours as he protected them in their decision to blockade this Chamber and the business of this Chamber.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will entertain another point of order but I think the Chair has heard enough arguments in regard to this and I think that we should carry on. I will listen to arguments, but I feel that members are taxing the Chair a little today. I would hope that members would come to a conclusion so that I can make a ruling on behalf of the Chamber. The hon. member for Kamloops on a point of order.