

Business of the House

Mr. Blais: The hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge knows full well that the backbencher's role in caucus, prior to the introduction of legislation, is to make sure that the legislation is acceptable when it is presented. Once the legislation has been presented following the input of the backbenchers in caucus, surely it is the obligation of those backbenchers to sell the legislation, as much as it is the responsibility of the minister to sell it, and to persuade gentlemen on the other side of its validity. Surely that is the role of hon. members on this side. Surely we have a role in debate. If we are to have an adversary process, we are not going to sit here and be bludgeoned by hon. members opposite—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blais:—with the use of misrepresentations, be they unconscious misrepresentations; and on top of that, using all the rules available to them in order to defeat the legislation of the government without any response from this party. I can understand the objection of the New Democratic Party. When we were dealing with this same motion with regard to Bill C-68, every member of the NDP had spoken—and when we consider the legislation which has been delayed in this House we note that that small party, representing less than 10 per cent of the total number of members in this House, has taken a disproportionate amount of time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: Sit down.

Mr. Blais: The hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) tells me that I should sit down. The hon. member has had an opportunity to speak whenever he has been in the House, but that has not been too often lately. He has had more opportunities than any other hon. member in this House, or any backbencher in the Liberal party whose attendance record is superior.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Since the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) has taken my name in vain, I want to point out that he has talked about equality among hon. members in this House. I have been seeking an opportunity to speak on second reading of this bill and I am being denied that opportunity by this motion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Beaudoin: Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker accused us of taking too much of the time of the House in relation to the number of Social Crediters who are elected. I think this is not true. If we take time it is because we want to comment on the issue and find it important, and we are entitled to speak in this House as much as he is no matter how many members are elected since we are elected democratically. If we are in this House it is because we secured a majority in our ridings.

[*Mr. Blais.*]

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave): I think the points advanced by the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) and the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin) are really points of debate and the parliamentary secretary should be allowed to continue his remarks.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin), I suggest that I did not refer to the fact that his party was taking too much of the time of this House. I spoke about the members from the socialist party. I did not refer to the Social Crediters for whom I have much respect. I respect not only the hon. member for Richmond but also all his colleagues.

[*English*]

When the hon. member for Nickel Belt—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blais: I have a problem with my voice. It is not as powerful as the voices of some hon. members opposite who are kibitzing. May I have some peace so that my arguments can be made?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski: We don't kibitz. Only the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) kibitzes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave): Perhaps the parliamentary secretary will regain his voice over the next couple of hours. I will leave a note for the next occupant of the chair to the effect that when this debate resumes at eight o'clock, certain time should not be subtracted from the hon. member because of the difficulty he has encountered.

An hon. Member: The poor little fellow!

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie)—Criminal Code—Suggested committee study on other methods of applying capital punishment; the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz)—Industry—Douglas Aircraft, Malton—Measures to save jobs—Date of announcement of aerospace policy; the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Roche)—External Affairs—Cambodia—Inquiry as to Canadian protest against violations of human rights.