

Standing Orders and Procedure

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I am opposed to any form of discrimination. I do not see why Parliamentary Secretaries and Cabinet Ministers should not be allowed to make statements during the 10 or 15 minutes preceding the Oral Question Period. Our new Standing Order refers to members, without excluding either Parliamentary Secretaries or cabinet ministers. Now, my hon. friend from Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) is saying that ministers for that matter have every opportunity to make statements following the Oral Question Period. I suggest his point is not valid, for if ministers are allowed to make statements at that time members of the opposition in turn may reply to them and ask questions. There can be no comparison. I respectfully suggest, therefore, that no distinction be made at that stage of our proceedings before the Oral Question Period with respect to Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries.

● (1130)

[English]

Mr. Jack Burghardt (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I just want to reiterate what the Government House Leader has said in response to the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans). As Parliamentary Secretary, under the provisions of Standing Order 43 I had the right to stand and make a motion as well. I feel that perhaps your Honour should reserve ruling on this matter so that we would have an opportunity to research the situation further. I feel that as an elected Member of Parliament, even though I am now a Parliamentary Secretary, I should have the right and privilege of making a statement during the time allotted to Members.

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Not to waste time, Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member took the words right out of my mouth. I resent being treated as a second class Member.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: You earned it!

Mr. Flis: I am already denied the opportunity of asking questions in the House and taking part in standing committees, and I would resent it very much if I were—

Mr. Clark: You are paid \$5,000 a year!

Mr. Flis: —denied the privilege of making a 90-second statement on issues which are very urgent to my constituents who elected me, who put me into the House to speak on their behalf.

Mr. Clark: Give up the \$5,000!

Mr. Paproski: Resign as Parliamentary Secretary!

Mr. Nielsen: Cry-baby!

Madam Speaker: I know that Hon. Members did not have time to read the new rules, but I think if they read them they will find that it is quite clear that at two o'clock, Members other than Ministers of the Crown may make statements pursuant to Standing Order 21. So that obviously excludes Ministers but includes, as in motions under Standing Order 43, Parliamentary Secretaries. So there has been no change in the spirit of these particular rules.

As for the matter of distributing statements on both sides of the House, perhaps I did not make myself quite clear. As I read the report which was presented to the House, it seems to me that the intention was to distribute these statements evenly between the two sides of the House. That would mean, in my interpretation, that one or two might be missed because we never know exactly how much time we have but it will be as close as possible to an equal number on both sides of the House.

Concerning the matter of the proportion, that is probably where I was not clear. When I mentioned proportions, I did not say why it would be necessary to apply proportions to certain of these interventions. The proportions would be, of course, between the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party and would have to be established according to the number of Members each party has in the House. I think that is, in general, quite a fair rule, as it is used during Question Period and can be applied to this particular part of the procedure.

Hon. Members will know that once in a while one side intervenes more than the other because of the particular timing, but it might be easier to remedy that situation because each Hon. Member will have 90 seconds in which to speak and we will know exactly how many 90 seconds there are in the time allotted to dealing with statements under this particular Standing Order.

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Madam Speaker, I merely wish to draw your attention to the fact that at the time they went to press, they omitted the fact that the House would not meet either on New Year's Day, Good Friday, the day set for the celebration of the birthday of the Sovereign, St. John the Baptist's Day or Dominion Day. I suggest it should read Canada Day now.

[English]

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, that word and that phraseology was left in at my specific request.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: And obviously agreed upon by all other Leaders of the Parties.

[Translation]

Mr. Prud'homme: I am sure the Hon. Member would not want to re-open the debate, Madam Speaker, but I should say that I am always anxious to meet the wishes of the Hon.