

*Points of Order*

Under the Parliament of Canada Act, estimates related to the Senate come through the conduit of the President of the Treasury Board, but the President of the Treasury Board is not at liberty to change them; they are simply conveyed according to the statute law.

**Mr. Speaker:** The point raised by the hon. member for Ontario is an important one. I thank the hon. member for his presentation. It was very clear and well thought out. I thank the hon. member for Calgary West for his point of clarification.

I do not think it would be appropriate, given the significance of the point, to proceed when the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond has indicated on behalf of the Official Opposition that he would like sometime to consider this matter before argument was concluded.

I take it the hon. member for Churchill is supporting that position. The hon. member for Churchill has given me some indication of how he may pursue the argument at another time.

I think the request for an adjournment for the continuation of the argument in the coming week is appropriate. I am certainly going to accept that suggestion. I wonder if at some appropriate time later on this afternoon members might contact me to indicate when they would be prepared to proceed with the argument. I might say I do not think it is appropriate for a very long delay, but I certainly will co-operate.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond):** I rise on a different point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier in the week I had raised with you and with other members in the Chamber the prospect of obtaining your guidance in terms of deliberations at Question Period.

We had a number of incidents today, although you were not in the chair, that made it obvious to members on this side of the House that perhaps the answers although not very forthcoming were a bit verbose and a bit long in responding to the succinct questions put by members of the Official Opposition.

I am wondering if there has been any reflection by yourself, other than what you had stated earlier in the week, to try to bring a little bit more cohesion and

succinctness from the other side in responding to various questions that we pose. As you can appreciate, there are a number of members of Parliament on this side, who for whatever reasons, believe they have good questions, but because of the timeframe are not having an opportunity to proceed.

• (1220)

I am just wondering, now that the Government House Leader has entered the Chamber, if he would like to make a submission on my intervention, or whether you would like to share with us any further views you might have on this particular subject.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before the hon. House Leader intervenes, and I certainly will hear him, I think I should point out that, yes, the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond raised this matter a few days ago. As he knows, I have contacted his office but we have not been able to have a discussion. I also made suggestions at that time that it might be a matter that should be discussed with members in the Chamber and then with myself.

I would like to hear from the hon. Government House Leader.

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, let me say that having spent many, many years on that side of the House, I understand the frustrations of the newly appointed House leader of the Official Opposition in that each and every day there is a long list of people who desire to ask questions, quite understandably. Tough choices have to be made and it is frustrating if, in fact, that is unable to occur because time runs out.

I must say that from our perspective we have some frustrations as well in terms of Question Period. Very frequently, if not in the overwhelming majority of cases, questions become mini-speeches, with a number of accusations and suggestions made of impropriety, malice, incompetence, et cetera. It is not surprising that when these accusations are made by way of preamble, the recipient of those accusations, the accused, feels it necessary to give an adequate response so the record does not show an accusation not responded to. That is part of the nature of our adversarial system. It is the nature of our adversarial system that I felt for some time, and I say this in all honesty, even when I was on that side of the House.