

Government Orders

members with more opportunities to ask questions that those questions would be real questions.

I think that we do have to reform Question Period. Perhaps we have to make it a little longer, I do not know. We certainly have to shorten up everything that goes on. I remember a time when there were all kinds of different questions asked here and backbenchers could do their job. They could get on and ask about something happening in their riding or their region. It is pointless now, I am sure, for a lot of members. They just do not have a chance. That is true, not just for government backbenchers.

That is true of opposition backbenchers as well. If they cannot go back to their people and say: "I raised this in the House of Commons", what are they to do? I think Question Period should be reformed.

Maybe we should look at more predictable ways of saying: "On this day, these kinds of questions will be asked." We have a ridiculous way in which everybody has to be briefed on every possible combination of questions every day. It must be horrible.

I think we could have some planning in the Question Period, but it has to be a package. It has to be something that corrects what is wrong with Question Period for that side of the House and for this side of the House. It cannot be something that is unilaterally imposed.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a comment.

I was watching the hon. member on television in my office, and he made a comment which I do not take exception to in the sense that I believe he made it in all honesty believing it to be true that I am one of the members who charged the Chair.

Very briefly, I would like to explain that particular incident when the Hon. Lloyd Francis was in the chair talking about the constitution. Indeed, there were members charging the Chair.

I was seated right about over there and came out of my chair to intercept a Liberal member who I thought was menacing my leader. That particular shot came on television and Bill Fox of *The Toronto Star* wrote up that "Andre was rushing the Chair".

In fact, I did not and some citizen of Toronto who happened to see that scene took exception to that article by Bill Fox in *The Toronto Star*. He took it to the Ontario Press Council and they said that yes, it was an article that

was improper and inaccurate. Indeed, a correction appeared in *The Toronto Star* in a small column.

Unfortunately, by then every computer in the country that carries this kind of information had in it that Andre rushed the Chair. I do not know how to get it out of the darn computers.

What I did finally was to go into the Archives and get the videotape of that whole incident. I have it in my office, and to anybody who believes I rushed the Chair that day, I would say: "Come to my office. I will show you the whole videotape and you will see that in fact I did not do that."

I raise that because there is no reason that the hon. member should know anything else. It is in every computer. Any time anybody does a semi-biographical article on Yours Truly, they contain in it "who once rushed the Chair". I will probably go to my grave with that, but I did not want to miss this opportunity to straighten out at least one member, and hopefully any others in the House who may be under that illusion.

Mr. Blaikie: I did say when I was corrected by the hon. member for Peace River that I accepted the correction. I accept in the presence of the hon. member that I was mistaken as to which Liberal he rushed and for what reasons.

When I think of those days and of some of the things that went on, the hon. member will have to ask himself, even given this correction, why he always comes to mind.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): A very short question and a very short answer, please.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, it is really a question that the hon. member for Peace River asked. I had some others, but time is moving on.

I was surprised too about the comment on legislative committee versus standing committee, technical and not witnesses. Certainly, in the McGrath report, the legislative committees were not to have witnesses and/or travel. That was to be done by the standing committee on the issue. That is what I thought and that was the purport.

My real question which will have a short reply is: Having had the experience of the legislative committee and/or the standing committee,—this disappoints me and not that I am that upset with it but let us see how it works—I really cannot see this whole envelope thing. The hon. member pointed out some interesting thoughts of how I think there is going to be a breakdown and how it is going to work.