

Madam Speaker:—which will resume after we have followed the provisions of the Standing Orders as to the statements by Members and Question Period.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, Standing Orders do not take precedence because you have recognized a question of privilege.

Mr. Cousineau: Sit down!

Mr. Nielsen: Surely you are going to hear the question of privilege, because it takes precedence over all other business of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I submit that the Chair should hear submissions on a question of privilege taking precedence over all other orders.

Some Hon. Members: Be quiet.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Chair is following the Standing Orders and I shall read them out to Hon. Members. Standing Order 20(1), which the Hon. Member probably wants to invoke, says:

Whenever any matter of privilege arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately.

That is what we did this morning at eleven o'clock. There was a question of privilege and the Chair took that question of privilege immediately because it did not stand in the way of Standing Order 18(3) which says:

At 2:00 o'clock p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and at 11:00 o'clock a.m. on Fridays, Members, other than Ministers of the Crown, may make statements pursuant to Standing Order 21. Not later than 2:15 o'clock p.m., or 11:15 o'clock a.m., as the case may be, oral questions shall be taken up.

Therefore the Chair is obliged to proceed to Statements by Members at this time, and to Question Period at 2.15.

Mr. Lewis: A point of order.

Madam Speaker: I cannot allow a point—

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, surely when you recognize it at eleven o'clock, you must continue the argument through Question Period.

Madam Speaker: I cannot allow a point of order. The Hon. Member might raise a point of order at three o'clock.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, there is precedent for hearing a question of privilege before embarking on Question Period.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cousineau: Three o'clock.

Mr. Nielsen: Hear our submission.

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Madam Speaker: I am interpreting the Standing Orders as they should be interpreted. The question of privilege does take precedence, but at two o'clock, the Standing Orders are quite clear; we must proceed to statements by Members and then to Question Period.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, you have to give us a chance to argue it. It has not been argued in the past because it has never come up.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Lawrence: What right do they have to turn the mikes off?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. This, of course, does not preclude the fact that after Question Period we will resume consideration of the question of privilege—

Some Hon. Members: Now!

Madam Speaker:—as we have done this morning. We have always had Question Period at two o'clock.

Mr. Nielsen: No, no.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Nielsen: There is a precedent.

Mr. Lawrence: Surely you should hear argument, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Blais: Wait until three o'clock, Allan.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members surely recall that during the constitutional debate, when we had questions of privilege raised for a whole week's time, Question Period took place regardless of the fact that we were considering questions of privilege. It might be difficult to resolve logically because of Standing Order 20(1) which I quoted, which says that questions of privilege must be taken up immediately.

Some Hon. Members: Right.

Madam Speaker: Right, but what we do in this House is not always logical because some Standing Orders—

An Hon. Member: They are not logical.

Madam Speaker: Exactly, they are not always logical, and Members have to recognize that. We have rules to satisfy our particular needs, and Members have always preferred to have their Question Period take place regardless of that fact that we might be on questions of privilege. I am basing my decision, which is final, on the precedent which occurred during the constitutional debate when we were on questions of privilege for an entire week.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!