

Borrowing Authority

or not a Member is permitted to take somewhat longer than the traditional time. However, to be arguing here whether a statement should be 53 seconds or 65 seconds is insanity. If that is the kind of priority which the Parliamentary Secretary brings to his office, perhaps he should reconsider his position.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, if you are going to give consideration to the point raised by the Parliamentary Secretary with regard to the length of time taken for statements under the relevant Standing Order, I would also respectfully invite you to consider the length of time taken by Ministers in answering questions during Question Period. I recognize that there is no specific length of time provided for in the rules with regard to answers, nor is there, I admit, with regard to questions. However, it seems to many of us that Ministers answering questions are taking more and more time than has been the case in the past and are, therefore, leaving less and less time for questions

Another matter which I would like you to take into account is the length of time being taken by government Members in applauding the answers given by Ministers. I will leave it to the judgment of others whether the answers really deserve the lengthy applause they often get, but the time taken for this applause also takes away from the time for asking questions.

There is a limitation in the rules on the length of time of Question Period. I realize that you try to look upon what the rules say in that regard in a constructive way, Mr. Speaker, and we all appreciate that. If you feel it is necessary to deal with the point raised by the Parliamentary Secretary, then I respectfully say that the points I raised are much more important.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed this exchange. As usual, there was wisdom from the Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) in his capacity as House Leader. I think that through this brief exchange we have identified that there are concerns about the use of that 60-minute period. The Government has historically raised questions with regard to the length of preambles, as another example. The purpose of the 60 minutes is to allow a maximum amount of input including questions, answers, and statements made on behalf of constituents.

I believe I detected a consensus of willingness of all three Parties of the House to support you, Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to bring a little brevity into all aspects of the 60 minutes in order that more Members may make statements, ask questions, and receive answers. Certainly the Government would be pleased to join such a consensus.

Mr. Speaker: I, of course, want to thank all Hon. Members for their interventions. The rule does, of course, call for 60 seconds. If one looks back over an extended period of time one will see that while there have certainly been occasions when the Chair has allowed an Hon. Member to extend that time, especially if, at least in the opinion of the Chair, the issue was

of some considerably importance, at other times, of course, the Chair has been more exacting.

However, with regard to the intervention of the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, I would hope that all Hon. Members on both sides would do as much as they can to constrain themselves to a minute or less in the interests of their colleagues who, of course, will be prevented from making their statements if a number of Hon. Members exceed the time allotted to them.

However, I take some comfort from the comments of the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray), the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), and the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis). Their position that there has to be some flexibility shown from time to time by the Speaker with regard to the absolute strict application of the rules is, I am sure, shared by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary.

With regard to the comments of the Hon. Member for Windsor West on the length of time that some Ministers take to answer and the fact that time is used up sometimes by applause and sometimes by something less admirable on the government side which does take time and which sometimes involves the intervention of the Speaker, that all uses up time. I know that any Members to which I refer are very much the exception on the opposition side, but sometimes preambles go on rather longer than is perhaps absolutely necessary to make the point.

I welcome the comments which have been made from both sides of the House. I am sure we will all strive mightily to ensure that we conduct ourselves in here in such a way that we are being as fair as is reasonable to all other Hon. Members. I thank Hon. Members for their interventions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BORROWING AUTHORITY ACT, 1988-89

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-109, an Act to provide for borrowing authority, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Speaker: When the House rose at 1 p.m. there were five minutes remaining in the question and comment period following the speech of the Hon. Member for Humboldt—Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse). The Hon. Member is not here. Resuming debate.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to speak on Bill C-109, a Bill through which the Government is seeking to borrow \$25.3 billion. In light of the Government's history of managing the