

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The period for questions and comments is now over. We are resuming debate.

Mr. Taylor: I rise on a point of order then, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member mentioned things which I did not say. The people of my constituency are not asking for trash, and all the programming which comes from the United States is not trash. Some of the CBC programs are—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order.

Mr. Taylor: I just wanted to correct that error.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): I believe the Hon. Member for Bow River knows that that is a question of debate and not a point of order.

Before recognizing the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, I should draw the attention of the House to the procedure which applies in this situation. Standing Order 41 (2) and (3) makes it clear that a reply should be allowed to an Hon. Member who has moved a substantive motion and that in such cases, the Speaker shall inform the House that the reply of the mover of the original motion closes the debate. This rule has been extended to include the mover of the motion for the second reading of the Bill, and this can be verified by reference to Citation 305 (1) of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition.

Citation 305 (2) of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition indicates that if a Member proposes a motion on behalf of another Member, a later speech by either will close the debate. This means that if a Minister moves the second reading of a Bill on behalf of another Minister, either Minister would have the right of reply. It might perhaps be logical to suppose that the Parliamentary Secretary in replying on behalf of his Minister, would enjoy the same right, but since the moving of a government Bill is reserved to a Minister of the Crown, we cannot take it for granted that a Parliamentary Secretary has the right to reply to the debate on a government Bill and that his speech will therefore close the debate.

We have among our precedents several instances where a Parliamentary Secretary has replied to a debate on behalf of his Minister. Having examined these precedents, some of which conflict with each other, I have come to the conclusion that the speech of the Parliamentary Secretary in such instances can close the debate only with the unanimous consent of the House. I would refer to a ruling of Mr. Speaker Michener on November 7, 1957.

He stated as follows:

I recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. I must inform the House that if the minister were to speak now, as he was the mover of this motion, he would close the debate. I understand that the parliamentary assistant in the department is speaking in the minister's place with his authority. The rules do not appear to prescribe what consequence that has or whether it is permissible. However, I understand that the House previously has accepted the parliamentary assistant in similar circumstances and of course it is the privilege of the House to accept that position tonight.

After hearing the comments of two Hon. Members on this point of procedure, the Speaker added:

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I raised the issue which has subsequently been spoken to by the two hon. members because I did not want to create a precedent which would necessarily be binding in the future. The House has accepted this practice in the past. There is one instance of it in the debates, at page 2918 of *Hansard* of April 18, 1955, where the parliamentary assistant rose on behalf of the minister and the Speaker informed the House that he would close the debate. I think it is preferable, as suggested by the hon. member for Macleod and the hon. member for Yorkton, that the House understand that the rule does not cover the matter exactly and that we proceed by leave of the House at this time and not by way of precedent.

In my view, Mr. Speaker Michener's interpretation of the procedure indicates the way we should proceed. The Parliamentary Secretary can wind up the debate with the unanimous consent of the House, otherwise, the Chair will be obliged to recognize any other Hon. Member who wishes to speak after the Parliamentary Secretary.

● (1610)

Now, as you may have noticed after my spontaneous ruling on this matter, it has been of some concern to the Chair as to whether at the beginning of this debate the Parliamentary Secretary may or may not wind up the debate for the Minister. This is the ruling of the Chair so everyone will understand. If the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Communications (Mr. Scott) is to speak to this Bill, he will be closing the debate. He can only do that with unanimous consent. Does the House give unanimous consent so the Parliamentary Secretary can resume debate?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, as I begin take two here, am I to understand that my intervention at this stage will not close the debate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): That is correct.

Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Would the Speaker therefore like to inquire if any other Member wishes to intervene prior to my rising to speak on behalf of the Minister?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Does anyone else wish to resume debate on this Bill?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Is the Hon. Member rising on a point of order or pursuing the debate?

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I can see that the Parliamentary Secretary is asking you to rise and ask if any other Member wishes to speak and to give him the floor first. However, nothing in the Standing Orders provides that a Member must speak before another Member. There has not been unanimous consent for him to close the debate, but we can hear him out. Other Members in the House might wish to speak after him.