

Government Orders

I have been in the chair since the beginning of this debate, and we have now had four members on the government side, two Liberal members and two NDP members speak to the substance of the bill. I also recognized the hon. member twice during the period for questions and comments. In accordance with the traditions of this House, I believe the Chair will again have to give the floor to members of the recognized parties before switching to an independent member. That being said, I can assure the hon. member that I am very much aware of his interest in this debate and that at the first opportunity, I will be delighted to recognize the hon. member as a speaker on the substance of the bill.

• (1530)

[*English*]

Mr. Nowlan: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is just a suggestion. You are a kind man, but the suggestion you use is the fallacy in the whole procedure. You talk about recognizing parties. If you check the rules, you will find that individual members and parties *per se* are not mentioned. The numbers you talked about of members taking part in the substance of the debate, with respect, is incorrect. There were three NDP members recognized before your recognition of the last member.

I would like to know for future reference, and I am serious, about people who have participated in this debate who were not even in the country. I understand how the system works. I have been around here for a few years.

I do not mind putting in the time waiting when other members are here and you take the natural rotation, whether you use a list of parties or whatever, but there has to be an order. I am asking you as Speaker, do you mean to tell this member and other members that the time you sit in this Chamber makes no difference as to recognition by the Chair?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I do not think there is anything in the Standing Orders about speaking time being allowed on the basis of the amount of time members spend in the House. I believe I am acting in accordance with parliamentary tradition by giving the floor to members of the various recognized parties who then speak for a certain time. As for independent members, I think it is only fair to wait until a certain

number of members have spoken before giving him the floor. That being said, so far I have recognized the hon. member's special interest in the subject by giving him the floor several times during the period for questions and comments, and I believe I am entirely fair in recognizing once more the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. And I should be delighted to give the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants the floor at the earliest opportunity.

[*English*]

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, at the outset I must say that I have deep respect for the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. I know that he will participate in this debate. However, to suggest that others have not been in the House is factually incorrect.

Having said that, that is against—

Mr. Nowlan: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. It just so happens that the hon. member is not stating facts. The member for Fundy—Royal who spoke this morning was not in the House when this debate started. The parliamentary secretary was not in the House when this debate started.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order. As an experienced parliamentarian, the hon. member will appreciate that a member does not refer to the presence or absence of a colleague in this House.

[*English*]

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you again for recognizing me for the third time. I hope I will be able to participate in this debate and I hope that others will also at the behest of the Chair.

At the outset let me say that I am opposed to the spending of taxpayers' dollars on this boondoggle. Let me further say that the government is spending \$42 million a year for 35 years for this missing link. The missing link is supposed to bring Prince Edward Island together with the rest of Canada, while at the same time we are currently spending \$21 million a year for a ferry.

This is typical Liberal and Conservative thinking. If you want to save \$21 million a year, spend \$42 million a year to do it. How dumb can they get? They are spending \$42 million a year to correct a problem of spending \$21 million a year. The government and the opposition spend