

Points of Order

- (a) In accordance with Office of the Comptroller General policy, all components of the department's programs are subject to evaluation on a five-year cyclical basis. This survey is to obtain information for an evaluation of the component which includes the system to pay suppliers of goods and services.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Yes.
- (d) One question asked recipients how satisfied they were with the performance of the federal government's payment of invoices.

2. The department is always interested in the efficiency of the cheque-issuing process. However, this survey is not based on any special concern but is part of an evaluation process as explained in the response to 1(a).

3. Two hundred and one.

[English]

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, a point of order.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, a point of order.

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, a point of order.

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QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. D. M. Collette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, if question No. 681 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

Mr. Stevens: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andre: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: The only points of order I can entertain now are points of order relating to the proceedings. No others are allowed at this time.

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, my point of order is very much on a question of proceedings. Citation 232 in Beauchesne reads as follows:

Points of order are questions raised with the view of calling attention to any departure from the Standing Orders or the customary modes of proceeding in debate or in the conduct of legislative business and may be raised at virtually any time by any member, whether he has previously spoken or not.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stevens: Subsection 3 of Citation 233 states:

Since the introduction of a time limit on the daily oral Question Period it has become the custom for the Speaker to recognize points of order only at the conclusion of the Question Period.

Citation 235 states:

Any member is entitled, even bound, to bring to the Speaker's immediate notice any instance of what he considers a breach of order. He may interrupt and lay the point in question concisely before the Speaker. He should do so as soon as he perceives an irregularity in the proceedings which are engaging the attention of the House. The Speaker's attention must be directed to a breach of order at the proper moment, namely the moment it occurred. A point of order may be taken after a debate is concluded—

And the citation goes on.

Would you kindly explain for my benefit and perhaps the benefit of other members of this House why you are ruling that points of order at the present time are, in fact, out of order?

Mr. Crosbie: On what authority?

Madam Speaker: What the hon. member just stated is absolutely correct. I can entertain points of order relating to routine proceedings but I cannot entertain points of order relating to something that is not before the House.

I would draw the attention of the hon. member to the citation which says:

The Speaker's attention must be directed to a breach of order at the proper moment—

I am telling the House that whatever points of order were raised earlier were not raised at the proper moment, namely, the moment they occurred.

An hon. Member: This is right after question period.

Madam Speaker: We have nothing before the House at the present time. Unless the hon. member wants to point out to me now any irregularity regarding the routine proceedings, I cannot hear the point. If the point is on routine proceedings, I will hear him with pleasure.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I wonder if all members of the House of Commons do not now have a question of privilege. That question of privilege is: whether or not the privileges of all members are being affected as a result of what I respectfully suggest is a misreading of Citation 233 in Beauchesne. This will bring us to the point that points of order are not now being allowed so we can deal with the customary modes of proceeding in the House. I think when we read the blues on this matter tomorrow we will be rather shocked at what happened. But as a result of what happened, especially with respect to the second point of order raised by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) if you do not hear him now, he, having the right to raise it at any time, will have lost his right to deal with a matter which falls within that general dictum of customary modes or proceedings in debate.

Never in eight years have I found that there is only one time to raise a point of order, and no other time, and especially no other time when the new point of order raised by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition is on a matter which has been before the House daily.

I rise now because if there is not a point of order—and I say there is a point of order, a point of order having been raised by