

Time Allocation

order. I hope it will not be necessary to interrupt the Hon. Member for Burnaby. The Hon. Member for Burnaby has the floor and I am listening.

Mr. Robinson: Just to conclude, Mr. Speaker, there are two fundamental points which I would ask the Chair to address. The first, with respect, is the totally unprecedented decision of the Speaker to ignore both points of order and questions of privilege which were pending before the House and to recognize the Minister for debate, knowing full well that other members were seeking the floor on questions of privilege and points of order. As I say, in my view that is both unprecedented and really quite unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker: It is my understanding that the period of debate for time allocation commences when the motion is presented.

Mr. Benjamin: We know that.

Mr. Speaker: This is the advice the Speaker has available. The period of debate commences when the motion is put, not when I recognize the Hon. Minister for debate. As a consequence, it is difficult for me to understand what difference it would have made even if I could have distinguished one shout from among the others. I think all Hon. Members are witness to the fact that there were a great number of members rising and expressing their points of view. In any event, it seems to me that it makes no difference because I am now entertaining any point which any member wants to make. As I said, I will courteously hear them.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, just to conclude, the point is surely not whether or not the two hours for debate on closure began to run at a particular time. The point is that there were members on their feet attempting to be recognized throughout the time that the Minister was reading the motion. Your Honour chose to ignore those members at that point.

Even more seriously, your Honour chose to continue ignoring those members and then to return to the Minister for debate. That is the point, not when the two hours start to run. With respect, I think the Speaker should explain to the House why those members who were on their feet with questions of privilege and points of order were completely ignored, and preference given to the Minister commencing his debate.

The second point—

Mr. Speaker: Allow me to answer that.

Mr. Benjamin: Let him finish.

Mr. McDermid: He's repeating himself. He said it all before.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that immediately after recognizing the Minister for debate I interrupted him to hear these points of order.

• (1610)

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, without belabouring the point, the question is why the Speaker recognized the Minister in debate at all while those other points were pending.

My second point is the one I want to conclude with, that is the point I made with respect to the propriety of accepting this motion at all. As I said, there can be no doubt that the motion of which the Minister gave notice is in fact a Government Notice of Motion. It is not a Private Member's Motion. It is a Government Notice of Motion. Under Routine Proceedings we have obviously skipped over Government Notices of Motions.

Yesterday the President of the Privy Council and Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) moved that we proceed to Government Notices of Motions. Had that been done today, and had the vote been positive, obviously, we would have done so. However, I would submit we have passed not only Petitions and Introduction of Bills but we have also passed Government Notices of Motions. Therefore, the motion which was introduced by the Hon. Minister was improperly accepted, with respect, by the Chair. We should have proceeded to Motions not to Government Notices of Motions as per the motion of the Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House for some eighteen and a half years. I have now seen six different Speakers. I want to suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, with respect, that what we saw this afternoon was something which was without precedent. In the 18 years I have been here, after every vote was taken, because of practice, convention, or precedent, Hon. Members were allowed to rise on points of order or questions of privilege to point out possible irregularities in the voting. There was that possibility today with two Liberal Members who walked around during the vote and the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly) who came in during the voting procedure.

In my 18 years in this House, there has been a practice, precedent and perhaps a convention that that be done. Today two Members of this House rose on a point of order or question of privilege to make those very points and the Chair did not recognize them. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and I say this with great deference and respect, I think your action was unprecedented and unacceptable for the House of Commons.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I also have been sitting in this House for close to 19 years. I have never once seen a person rise either on a point of order or a question of privilege, not having precedence over any Member of this House who seeks permission to speak on debate or on Motions. I have never seen that happen with an Hon. Member, let alone a Minister.

I do not know how this came about. However, I would like to refer to yesterday's *Hansard* at page 5120. At the bottom of the page Your Honour is describing the function of the Speaker as follows: