

distinction that was not the case in the 1950s and 1960s and I ask the Chair to bear it in mind in the interpretation of this rule.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, just very quickly I want to emphasize that we have a Standing Order which is for a specific purpose.

First, I am very concerned that what we are doing here is pushing the Chair into a role which I do not think this particular Standing Order wants.

Second, I think we have to be very careful here. In a sense, we are moving into a veiled criticism of decisions and the process by which we have operated. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, the rulings have been good. They are rulings we should support quite comfortably and completely, and we have a process called usual channels that we work out of.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**Mr. Speaker:** I have listened very carefully to the matter raised by the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond, commented upon by the hon. member for Kamloops and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I have listened also very carefully to the comments of the hon. parliamentary secretary who has in the past years been very much involved in attention to the orders of this place and also to some steps in the reform of the orders of this place.

First of all, I want to say to hon. members that I do not take this intervention and this discussion in any way as a criticism of past Speakers, or past rulings, or myself. I want that clearly understood.

Also, it should be clearly understood by all hon. members and the public who is watching that sometimes we are criticized for not proceeding in a civilized way. This has been an example this morning of proceeding in a very civilized way.

I am cognizant of the mention made on both sides of the Chamber of the special arrangements that were done, as the hon. parliamentary secretary says, "through usual channels", in order to have additional debating time for all hon. members with respect to the serious matters of the Constitution. I certainly must say as your Speaker that the comments made in support of that on both sides of the House are proper and should be supported.

#### *Speaker's Ruling*

The difficulty that the Speaker is in under this order is that until perhaps a recommendation comes out of the members management committee and is supported by members of the House, until there is a more or a different interpretation of the word "emergency", the Speaker is still bound by that word.

Now, having said that, there are a number of things that go into a Speaker's mind when the Speaker is trying to determine whether there is clearly an emergency or whether circumstances are changing from day to day, either building toward an emergency or sometimes diminishing the emergency. The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond commented upon that.

Comment has been made that there have been times in the past where, working through the usual channels that the hon. parliamentary secretary mentioned, what might not have been in the strictest and narrowest interpretation an emergency debate, was, nonetheless, acceded to by both sides of the House. This was out of a general feeling that it was in the public interest and the interest of this place that a debate take place.

I am also conscious of the fact, as the hon. parliamentary secretary and the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands pointed out, that after the reform committee's recommendations were—not, by the way completely accepted on this, but partially—accepted the old difficulty of a Speaker interfering with the Orders of the Day to have an emergency debate is gone. That is in the past because, as has been properly pointed out, an emergency debate would take place after Orders of the Day are concluded, except on a Friday.

Now the best approach I can take is to consider carefully what has been said. It is very difficult to ask a Speaker to unilaterally change the rules. But in determining what is an emergency, the Speaker, as has been pointed out, looks at a number of things. What may not have been an emergency at one point may become one. What might be building to an emergency might not be needed to be treated as an emergency for a number of reasons: one, because circumstances change, another might be because there is another opportunity to debate it, which is one of the things that a Speaker does have to take into account.