

Point of Order—Mr. MacEachen

phased out in Churchill. The people of that community did not know that CHFC was to be phased out. I was the first to hear about it here in Ottawa. I telephoned the mayor of Churchill and a general meeting was held there. Everyone was up in arms. It was a matter of urgent and pressing necessity to that community. Standing Order 43 was the only vehicle I had at my disposal on the day I received feedback from the mayor of Churchill. Through the Standing Order I was able to bring the matter to the attention of the government.

When hon. members on the government side say "no" to motions under this rule, sometimes neither the minister involved nor his parliamentary secretary becomes aware of what is going on in certain remote areas. People in those areas cannot pick up the *Sun*, the *Globe and Mail* or the *Gazette*, and I think many motions under this rule are the result of newspaper stories.

My constituency does not have the benefit of daily newspapers, and I feel that the motions which I propose here are always on matters of emergency because the people in my constituency do not really know what this government is doing or what is happening. That is why things become matters of urgent and pressing necessity. It is very frustrating to put forward a reasonable preamble followed by a motion and then to hear "no", because I do not have a chance to explain just what the problem is.

Quite some time ago Your Honour did recognize in question period hon. members who earlier had proposed motions under Standing Order 43. That way hon. members could follow up their motions under the rule by asking the government questions. Answers were received. If an hon. member did not get an answer, he could resort to the late show. That was a good system because in one day or within a week a member could follow through and perhaps get an answer. A matter which involves the phasing out of an important service in a small community is something that is urgent and pressing, and a vehicle is needed so that a member can convey the message to the minister involved, who is not always aware of the situation. Taking any of that vehicle away is really taking away a private member's input in this House.

I would like to leave that with Your Honour because I do not feel I abuse the rule. Perhaps there are times when it is abused, but Standing Order 43 is the one vehicle I have. My constituency does not have a newspaper so that I can generate from it motions under Standing Order 43, but I feel that the motions I have proposed have been genuine.

Mr. Speaker: I indicated that I would like to close this discussion with the hon. members who have just spoken. However, the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott) was referred to in an earlier contribution in the debate, and I think it only fair that one member who has been singled out by another ought at least to have some time to make a contribution or a counter-balancing contribution.

The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) has been present during the debate and I believe he was trying to

[Mr. Smith (Churchill).]

get the floor before five o'clock. I hope both hon. members will be brief so that we can close the discussion.

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I was not in the House when a minister criticized my use of motions under Standing Order 43. I feel very sad because I had hoped the minister would understand the grave problems, I as a member of parliament face when questioning a minister who does not even bring his estimates to committee. Sometimes, I find this minister very hard to question. Where there is smoke there is sometimes fire, and one has to be very careful about that. Sometimes I think the minister protests too much. The minister to whom I refer has three jobs, and he has many responsibilities. As a member of parliament, I have to use every tool at my disposal.

Mr. Blais: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: We are on a point of order.

Mrs. Pigott: Members of parliament have to use motions under Standing Order 43. They have to use questions, debate and the late show. Hon. members have to do everything they can to get this minister to listen to them. There are serious problems in this ministers' departments. He is responsible for the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. There are demonstration projects about which I have questions I want answered. There are questions regarding NCC tendering practices. There are questions regarding York Place. One charge has been laid, but I hope there will be many more. There are hundreds of questions regarding Les Terrasses, and I have to use all the tools at my disposal to question this minister.

Standing Order 43, is a very important tool to backbench members. I appreciate this opportunity to say, that I am glad I have this tool with which to bring matters to the attention of a minister.

Mr. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am one of those who is a Standing Order 43 enthusiast. I always enjoy the wit and care with which motions under this rule are prepared. I am fascinated by the way the parties opposite co-ordinate their strategies so as to use Standing Order 43, as well as the question period to their maximum effect. However, if anybody was to look in all honesty at the Standing Orders, and compare what they see with what we see regarding Standing Order 43, he would clearly be driven up the wall if he was trying to find out what was urgent and pressing in Canada. The first thing we have to do in looking at this, is to say that the way in which the rule is being used may be appropriate, but it is certainly not the way the rule was written.

The second point I should make is that, like the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I am also guilty of having tried to rearrange the rules of the House of Commons in order to do something about Standing Order 43. I was a party to the move to take it from the end of the question period and to put it before the question period. We