

*Point of Order—Mr. Nielsen*

When clause 14 of Bill C-207, an Act respecting the organization of the Government of Canada and matters related or incidental thereto, was being considered in committee of the whole the hon. member for Peace River raised a point of order to the effect that a document referred to in committee of the whole should be laid upon the table.

The chairman ruled that there was no known procedure whereby a document could be laid upon the table of the committee of the whole since the committee was down by its order of reference which in the present instance was clause 14 of Bill C-207.

Whereupon the hon. member for Peace River appealed to Mr. Speaker from the decision of the Chair.

I draw your attention to that process, Madam Speaker, because notwithstanding the terminology of Standing Order 55(4) which would lead one to the conclusion that all the Speaker can do is hear the question and then put the question on appeal, the Speaker on that occasion allowed debate in order to come to a decision as to whether or not there existed a valid point of order and in order to decide whether or not to put the question on the appeal. I draw that precedent to the attention of the Chair for that purpose.

With regard to the question which I raised as a valid point of order with respect to the hon. member for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, I do not discuss or advance the merits or demerits at all. I had a right to raise that point of order. I had a right to have it ruled upon. I then had a right to appeal.

I raised the point of order, the Chair ruled upon it. I was denied even being heard on a point of order to appeal. The vote went ahead. I said "on division" on the passage of the schedule when it was called. I rose on a point of order when the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole called for a standing vote in order to say that that was improper. He refused to hear me. I wanted to appeal that refusal which was an implicit ruling that that was not going to be a point of order.

I felt, as hon. members on this side left, that we were railroaded last night. That is not a healthy atmosphere to arouse in this place. We simply were not heard.

**Mr. Olivier:** Oh, come on!

**Mr. Nielsen:** I hear the usual interjection from the hon. member for Longueuil (Mr. Olivier). Anyone who wishes to treat this submission, which is a very serious submission, with the contempt displayed by the member for Longueuil does not think very much of this place.

The question I raised is a very serious one indeed. It involves the treatment of the members of the House of Commons, particularly the opposition, by officers of the House. The least that we can expect is not to be gagged. The least that we can expect is to be heard for a sufficient time in order for the Chair to find out what we are objecting to. The result in this case of not even listening was that we were denied on two occasions very substantial and fundamental rights given to us under the Standing Orders to appeal the ruling of the Chair.

I simply raise this point to draw it very forcefully to the attention of the Chair in the hope that when you have your morning meetings with your officials you might address this

question, in the fervent hope that it will never, never happen again.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, I listened very patiently and closely to the speech made by the member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) and I must admit that I could hardly keep a straight face, because basically, he was merely trying to justify an attempt by representatives of his party to make a disturbance yesterday evening, and their entirely infantile and irresponsible attitude in leaving the House.

I shall recall, if I may, that the circumstances in which the Progressive Conservative Party acted so irresponsibly and childishly were the following: the House, in Committee of the Whole, was considering legislation concerning the business of supply, and debate on this subject is clearly regulated in the Standing Orders of the House. I may refer hon. members again to Standing Order 58(10), which reads, and I quote:

—If the motion under consideration at the hour of interruption—

—at 9.45 p.m.—

—is a no-confidence motion, the Speaker first shall put forthwith, without further debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of that proceeding, and forthwith thereafter put successively, without debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of any item of business relating to interim supply—

—and so forth.

Thus, Madam Speaker, the context and circumstances in which the member for Yukon attempted to be recognized by the chair were as follows: the House was in the middle of proceedings that are very strictly regulated, and normally, this type of proceedings takes place without interruption, without debate or amendment, and as quickly as possible. Only exceptionally can hon. members intervene on points of order. Now, last night, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, although functioning within this very restricted framework, was extremely patient and courteous in his dealings with the Official Opposition, considering the arrogant and irresponsible and, I say it once again, infantile attitude they showed at the time.

He was patient, and he acted fairly and equitably, because he heard several points of order before deciding to apply Standing Order 58(10)—points of order which, in fact, they were not, because *Hansard* shows us exactly what was said on the occasion of these pseudo-points of order. These delaying tactics, this means of creating a disturbance in the House were used to protest that a minister of state did not have sufficient responsibilities and therefore the adopted or proposed votes could not be justified. An attempt was made to infer—I was later obliged to deny this formally to get the record straight—that the Standing Orders relating to the business of supply were steamrollered through the House under the threat of closure, although that is absolutely false.