

B.C. Telephone Dispute

certain aspects of management that I feel are of concern to me, then I should also express them.

Mr. Knowles: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: I cannot allow this debate to go on too long. As hon. members know, there is a rule of thumb that we take into consideration the length of the initial statement and then allow for questions in that time.

I will allow the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway to ask a question. I am afraid the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) has had a chance to make a statement. I think I will have to draw a line there and recognize the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Of course, under Standing Order 15(3) the Chair has absolute discretion in determining how much time can be spent on these proceedings. However, would the Chair take into account the fact that there are no British Columbia members on the other side? They are all on this side of the House; five of them in this party, and some to my left. Could that not be taken into consideration? I know my colleague, the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle) has a question to ask and I know that my friend, the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) has one. Perhaps the Chair could extend the determination of the time to include at least those two members.

Madam Speaker: No member had risen except for the hon. member for Capilano and the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway at the time I said I had to end debate. The hon. member is now saying that several others have questions, but they had not so indicated. I do feel the length of this debate has to be reasonable. It seems to me several questions have been asked on this side. I will now recognize the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway. I am afraid I must stick to the rule that debate should not be extended too far. Taking into account that the statements were all brief, I think that suggests something to me about the briefness of the following question period.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, of course, I am not going to question your ruling at all. However, I would draw to your attention also the fact that there was no notice given of the minister's intention to make a statement, which is customary. Obviously that gives rise to more questions, than if such notice had been given.

All I am pleading is that the hon. member for Capilano and the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River be recognized for a short question.

Mr. Collenette: Madam Speaker, I do not want to prolong this discussion, but the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) knows that while notice may be given very often, it is not required by the rules.

Mr. Nielsen: It is courtesy.

Mr. Collenette: In some cases it may not be possible, and the minister has not had the opportunity to explain why he did not give the customary notice.

Although, as the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) has said, you have absolute discretion under Standing Order 15(3) about the length of the question period, I for one would object if any member spoke twice in this brief question period. I would support your original intention, which was to allow no other member to speak more than once.

Mr. Oberle: Madam Speaker, I just want to refer to what the acting House leader has said. There was an arrangement yesterday between the minister and the member of the NDP party to bring the question to the House. As you will recall, I rose on a question of privilege following the question period to remind the minister of the responsibility that he has outlined this afternoon. You did not allow me to continue with my question of privilege, Madam Speaker. I did not think yesterday that the minister was serving the cause at all in asserting himself in the manner he did, clearly taking the side of the union, and having made a prior arrangement with a member from the NDP party, which, incidentally, carried over to this day.

The minister had no intention of making a statement on motions. He had an intention to answer a question from a member of the NDP party. Madam Speaker, you will recall that you did not have notice from the minister that he had intended to make a statement on motions. Therefore, it would not be fair at this point to stop the debate. There was merely an arrangement between two members of the House, totally ignoring that there are some valid comments that need to be made on this subject by members on this side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: The Chair is not aware of any kind of an arrangement. It is not the concern of the Chair.

An hon. Member: It should be.

Madam Speaker: It cannot be the concern of the Chair.

I will recognize the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway. I will not recognize anyone who has already spoken once. I will recognize a few others who might rise following that hon. member. I had a feeling that everyone who had any intention of asking questions had asked them. That is why I arrived at the decision to end the debate.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I have a short question. First, I wonder whether my friend, the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle), would note that it is the New Democratic Party, not the NDP party. That is a double: NDP party, party.

Madam Speaker: The question should be addressed to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Regan).

Mr. Waddell: Has the minister received representations over a period of the last year from union members and others from