

providing \$100 million to the clean-up of the Fraser River several months ago.

I understand that there may be an additional announcement, although it does not come under the jurisdiction of the Minister of the Environment, during the course of the next few days but I think you can appreciate, Madam Speaker, that it would never be politically wise for a parliamentary secretary to upstage any minister in making such an announcement.

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PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

Madam Deputy Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs and Government Administration from Norway.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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POINT OF ORDER

REPLY IN QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, during Question Period I raised a question with reference to judges' salaries as opposed to cutting the Court Challenges Program, the increase in salaries versus the cutting.

The minister stood up and said he could not answer the question because there was a bill before the House of Commons.

I would like clarification on this matter. I draw your attention to Beauchesne's, page 132, of the fifth edition, and I quote:

(12) Questions should not anticipate a debate scheduled for the day, but should be reserved for the debate.

Likewise, in the new edition of Beauchesne's, the sixth edition, page 121, it states:

(12) Questions should not anticipate a debate scheduled for the day, but should be reserved for the debate.

We are not debating the judges' salary bill today. We are debating an environmental bill. Does that mean we cannot ask questions on the general environment, that we cannot ask questions on pensions because there is a pension bill somewhere in the works of the House of Commons?

Point of Order

With respect, Madam Speaker, I would like a ruling on this. I believe that the minister was wrong and that he should have answered my question. He used the wrong way of ducking a good question.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, we can certainly have a debate about whether that was a good question or not.

Quite frankly, the provisions of Beauchesne's and the experience of the House is that when a bill is before the House, it will come up for debate and that is the proper time for members on all sides to express their opinion and to vote on it.

The use of Question Period to engage in debate which can merely be repetition of what will come later while the bill is under discussion is an abuse of Question Period.

Finally I would remind the hon. member that there is no requirement that any question be answered. So the point of order—

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. minister.

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, it is also out of order to shout down the person trying to address the Chair.

There is no requirement that in fact an answer be provided to any question. Therefore, it is not in order to raise as a point of order an objection to the answer to a question that he received during Question Period. He may not have liked the answer but that is the way it goes. You do not always get the answer you want.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, with all due respect to the government House leader, the fact of the matter is that he did seek to hide behind procedure or, to put it more charitably, use a procedural argument in order not to answer the question of the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

If he is able to do that without the Chair saying something to the contrary then that would set, in my judgment and I am sure the judgment of many other members, a very new precedent, a very new rule with respect to Question Period. To this point the rules are quite clear that questions cannot anticipate an Order of the Day.