

Point of Order—Mr. Blaikie

[Translation]

PETITION

MR. PETERSON—TREATMENT OF SYRIAN JEWS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson) on Wednesday, May 16, 1984, meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

* * *

[English]

POINT OF ORDER

MR. BLAIKIE—OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE QUESTIONS DURING QUESTION PERIOD—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: On April 6 last the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) raised a point of order relating to the Question Period and invited the Chair to share its thoughts with the House on the conduct of that part of our daily proceedings. He said:

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, whether you are simply letting us slide until we muster the will to discipline ourselves. That may be a legitimate strategy. However, I, for one, Mr. Speaker, would urge you to use your role as Speaker to discipline the Question Period. If you do not feel people should be allowed supplementary questions, do not allow them.

Again on May 9, 1984, when the Chair did not allow a supplementary to the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-St. James (Mr. Keeper), the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill invited the Chair to tell the House if it was changing the rules as they pertain to Question Period. While it is tempting for the Chair to make a comprehensive ruling on the conduct of Question Period, the present occupant is well aware that, without the co-operation of Members, the Chair's responsibility to maintain order is much more difficult. I would much rather seek the co-operation of all Members.

I will, however, deal with the use of supplementary questions which has been of concern to me for some time. I think it is timely that this matter be addressed. On May 9, in quoting from Beauchesne's Citation 371, I reaffirmed the principle that the extent to which supplementary questions may be asked is in the discretion of the Speaker. I also said that I would discourage supplementary questions which are not supplementary but which are, in fact, additional even though related questions.

I think I should remind the House what, under our practice, constitutes a supplementary question. There is a growing practice, after a first question has been answered, to ask a new, related question, or another question which is an expanded form of the original one. There is also a growing tendency to ask a Minister one question and to direct a supplementary to another Minister because it deals with the same subject matter.

Mr. Speaker Michener, in his statement to the House on February 26, 1959, qualified supplementary questions as "a matter of grace". It seems his comment was inspired by Speaker Lowther who laid down the rule for the British

House. At column 41 of the House of Commons debates for July 5, 1915, Speaker Lowther is reported to have said:

—all supplementary questions are irregular and are not provided for at all in any Standing Order. It is entirely a matter of grace.

I may say generally that the object of supplementary questions is to elucidate any ambiguity in the reply of a Minister or to seek further information if he can give it:—

On April 14, 1975 Mr. Speaker Jerome, at page 440 of *Hansard*, defined a supplementary question in the following terms:

The supplementary question is a follow-up device flowing from the response and ought to be a precise question put directly and immediately to the Minister without any further statement.

At page 346 of Erskine May's Twentieth Edition we find the following:

A supplementary question may refer only to the answer out of which it immediately arises, must not be read or be too long—

I also wish to remind Hon. Members that supplementary questions should rarely be preceded by a preamble or contain any argument. Since the supplementary question flows from the answer to the original question, it should normally not require explanation or preamble. It should be brief and to the point. If, in answering, a Minister claims that another Member of the Cabinet is concerned with the subject matter of a question, then a supplementary to another Minister may be allowed; but the redirection of a supplementary question to another Minister must be clearly linked to the answer to the first question. It is not sufficient to claim that the supplementary question to another Minister is on the same subject matter as the principal question. There must be obvious cause from the answer of the first Minister for the Chair to allow a supplementary question to be redirected to another Minister.

In concluding my remarks I will quote a few words from Speaker Lamoureux who, on September 14, 1971, faced the same issue and sought the co-operation and support of the House in saying:

I recognize the importance of the matter and the right of Hon. Members to ask supplementaries, but the rules are clear. Supplementaries are within the competence of the Chair; and when the Chair feels that we have reached a point when other members should be given a chance to ask questions, Hon. Members should try as far as possible to co-operate and give the Chair an opportunity to move on to another member.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Saskatoon West on the usual matter relating to House business.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I would like to call upon the Government House Leader to give us the proposed order of business for tomorrow and possibly to the end of next week.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that this week the House Leaders had fruitful and productive meetings. It looks like the next week will be productive for