

Points of Order

Mr. Waddell: Any five-year old would recognize that, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Waddell: I submit, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am anticipating the same thing hon. members are thinking just now, but I must at least hear a few sentences of what the hon. member says in order to know whether he does have a point of order which is related to routine proceedings.

Mr. Waddell: My point is, Madam Speaker, that you should simply not recognize members and move on.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: I thank the hon. member for that advice, but I cannot follow it.

• (2150)

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, I am hoping the parliamentary secretary will exercise a great deal of discretion. I am most interested in hearing the contextual rationale for the delay in answering a question which I placed on the Order Paper on October 6.

An hon. Member: Is this the British House of Commons?

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): This is not the British House of Commons, in any event. In October I asked for some extracts of the public accounts as to the expenditures on airport improvements and capital outlays. Of course the parliamentary secretary will be aware—apparently I do not have his attention, so I shall wait until I do—that I have on more than one occasion stood in my place and asked about the installation of radar at Victoria International Airport. I am rather interested in knowing how many radar installations there have been since I started asking my questions about four years ago, and at what types of airports. I would be interested in knowing the way he will wriggle around this one and explain that there is more in it than the question seems to imply.

I put a second question on the Order Paper on October 7. I thought it was a very simple question. It related to the hon. Senator Perrault and whether he is entitled to exempt staff and, if so, how many? I should have thought by now, five and a half months later, if he has not been employing exempt staff, that fact might have been revealed. If he had exempt staff privileges, as do some ministers, it would have been possible within five and a half months to describe which positions had been filled, what was the job description and qualification for each position, and what is the salary for each position, I feel there is some cause for concern on my part that there should be such a delay in answering these questions.

The other two questions have been on the Order Paper for a less lengthy duration, but they are important questions. Again they request extracts of the public accounts or of the estimates. They relate to the coastguard.

As other hon. members have stood in their places and mentioned, questions are asked when answers are wanted. By the time the answers come, the need for the information which is being sought is sometimes past and out of date. I feel there is just cause for complaint on this side of the House for the lengthy delays.

My questions which have been on the Order Paper for a month concern figures which public servants can extract from the appropriate documents. I know from experience that answers to questions on the Order Paper are of first priority to public servants. It is the first thing each morning that a public servant receives on his desk. He is expected to deal with it expeditiously and get it, through his under secretary, to the minister. I cannot understand the lengthy delays we have been experiencing in this Parliament.

Mr. Neil: Madam Speaker, my point of order concerns a question which I put on the Order Paper approximately ten months ago, in June of last year.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Neil: It was a fairly simple question. It was an inquiry of Statistics Canada as to how many surveys were carried out which required personal contact by an employee with an individual or a householder. It also asked how many full-time and part-time employees were on the payroll in each province.

I put that question on the Order Paper because I received a letter from a constituent who, shortly after filing his income tax return, was called on by one of his neighbours who indicated that he was a part-time employee of Statistics Canada and was asked questions pertaining to his personal income and expenses. My constituent felt that it was rather impertinent of one of his neighbours to ask these personal questions, particularly when he had just filed an income tax return and the information was available to the government. In a very short period of time, that constituent will be filing his 1980 income tax return. I presume he may be called on again by one of his neighbours asking similar questions.

My question is fairly simple. It is directed to Statistics Canada. Since Statistics Canada is the department which keeps the statistics, certainly within a period of ten months it should be able to punch its computer or do whatever is necessary to extract the information I requested in this question.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, once before I asked the hon. parliamentary secretary about question No. 681 which has been on the Order Paper of 11 months and two days. I cannot understand why it is taking so long for my question to be answered, because Parks Canada has a sizeable staff. The reason I am asking this question is because Banff National Park is in my constituency. Many people in my constituency have asked why so many studies are being carried out, but there never is any action. I wanted a list of the studies carried out between 1974 and 1979, the subject of those studies, and whether they were put out to tender or conducted by the staff of Parks Canada. It is not a difficult question. Perhaps the