

Routine Proceedings

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I must say to the hon. member for Churchill that the Speaker has already stated in his ruling that neither the Lachance incident nor the Blenkarn ruling should be treated as precedents.

However, the Chair will take the hon. member's comments under advisement and return to the House at a later time on points of order raised.

I want to thank the hon. member for Kamloops, the hon. member for Churchill, the hon. member for Edmonton East, and all other members for their contribution in this particular debate. I will come back with a ruling as soon as possible.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments but as my hon. friend for Kingston and the Islands also indicated since the report has only been tabled we have not had a chance to examine it. If there is new information or evidence that we feel would be helpful in the Chair's ruling we would certainly feel an obligation to raise that on Monday.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If there is something further after the Speaker has made a ruling and if the hon. member does have another point of order or point of privilege that he would like to raise he may do so.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take overly long to intervene on this point of order because certainly this is an opposition day, the day provided for the Official Opposition. It is unfortunate that the NDP has decided to take up so much of that time but I think we as government members must respond to this point of order.

I have heard a lot of talk here this afternoon indicating that we are dealing here with fundamental principles. I agree with that. We are dealing with fundamental principles, but the fundamental principle that is being forgotten in this process, and the one that I think has been very clearly abused by the NDP members is this: There is a fundamental principle that the opposition has a right to oppose but the government must, in the end, have the right to govern. It must be able to proceed with its legislation.

That is the very fundamental and probably the most important principle of a parliamentary democracy. I think that is the question that we really are looking at

here today. It is not what happened with the chairman's ruling in the committee. It is why the chairman had to rule as he did. Because, Mr. Speaker, if we look at the point of order that has been raised before us today, I think, first of all, there are a few things that have to be said.

First, as you have said several times, the Speaker has already ruled on the substantive part of this issue. The Speaker has clearly said that he does not accept this as a precedent of any longstanding. It is not a precedent with which this House is seized. I understand that argument and I am not prepared to argue that.

But the NDP members continue to insist that even after the Speaker has ruled, and even after that process was completed in the finance committee, somehow they should once again be allowed to derail and throw off the tracks this whole process. Of course, that is what this whole thing is really about. It is really a way of the minority once again acting in a tyrannical fashion or to use their own words, "putting the jackboots to Parliament". That is essentially the kind of activity that we are seeing.

You know, Sir, as Speaker, that one of the very important, fundamental roles of the Speaker is the obligation to maintain order. Of course that same principle applies to the chairman of a committee. The chairman must try through whatever means he or she has to maintain order in the committee.

What we were dealing with here in this particular committee was not your run of the mill committee behaviour. In fact, what you are dealing with, Mr. Speaker, was very extreme behaviour by the NDP party. Extreme to the point that I am not sure any of us, certainly in my memory, in my 10 years here in the House, have I seen that kind of behaviour of people running around with little pink pillows, slippers on their feet and bells on their toes! I mean, Mr. Speaker, surely, if ever there was an example of extreme childish behaviour, that certainly was the case.

Now, if my memory serves me, the committee had sat in a marathon sitting for something like 36 hours. Thirty-six hours of non-stop sitting simply because the NDP members were not prepared to deal with substantive debate to allow the House and committee to proceed. They wanted strictly to play games, not only as they had demonstrated in this committee, but as they