

Government Orders

I personally object to the remarks by the Liberal member who pretends that he also opposes the GST, despite what his candidate for the leadership is doing right now—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I think hon. members will agree that the Chair has been quite patient. But we should not change points of orders into debate. The hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, with the full knowledge that I, as a genuine and sincere member of Parliament, this afternoon am being manipulated by my colleagues to my left, forced back on to my feet, I want to point out that this member made no reference to any member of the NDP caucus. Now, the fact that five or six felt it necessary, given their performance this afternoon, to get up and protest their innocence is an editorial comment not coming from me but from their own lips.

May I simply say that when I brought to the attention of the House that notwithstanding the strong passions in this place that the Chair and the authority of the Chair must be respected, and notwithstanding my sincere attempt to improve the atmosphere in this place, it is obvious that my words of wisdom fell on deaf ears of my colleagues opposite. That, Madam Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Churchill has a point of order.

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, I did not have a chance to finish my remarks with regard to the first intervention of the Liberal member. He indicated that it was the Speaker's job to maintain order in the House and to uphold the authority of the Chair. I would argue that it is the responsibility of the entire House to do so. In getting up to speak for whatever particular reason, he is misleading the House. As the Speaker likes to point out to those people in eastern and western Canada who may be watching and listening to this, it is very important that people understand that it is not only the Speaker who has the responsibility for maintaining the authority of the Chair, it is the entire House and all members of the House from all parties must maintain that role of the Chair.

Again, we do not always like the rulings of Speakers from time to time, but we recognize that once a ruling is made that that must be accepted.

• (1755)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): A point was raised about ten minutes ago. I ruled on it. As well, I said I would come back to the House should there be any changes after we have conducted some research. I think we have heard many comments on that ruling, on everybody's perception of my ruling. I think this subject should be closed for tonight.

Resuming debate. On a point of order, the hon. member for Calgary West.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, having spent 15 minutes trying to get this debate started, I was quite prepared to begin speaking when I heard a member of the opposition from the New Democratic Party shouting "point of order". My only defence in this chamber is to shout "point of order" a little louder and perhaps a little faster because I think we really do have a point of order. I think the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte put his finger on it.

The issue, Madam Speaker, that you have been asked to consider by the member is whether or not the Chair is being challenged. Is there a pattern of challenge that exists? As the former whip of the New Democratic Party pointed out, it is up to all of us to uphold the Chair.

I put my seat on the line some two or three days ago after observing tapes of debate in this House where two members of that party did, indeed—and I repeat it, did, indeed—challenge the Chair by voting twice, voting yea and voting nay on the same division which, if there ever was a classic case of putting the Chair in an awkward position, that was it.

I heard a supposedly responsible officer of this House, the House leader of the New Democratic Party, rise on a point of order and ask if his behaviour was appropriate when he walked into the House in the middle of a division. Madam Speaker, after being a House leader for as long as he has been, he knew that it was inappropriate.

The challenge is not to the government, the challenge is to the Chair. There is a pattern. There is a long, well-established tradition in this House that when a party, whether it is the official opposition, the government, any party, intends to make a creative use of the