

On the Order being read: "House again in Committee of Ways and Means", the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) raised a point of order to the effect that, as the said Order was read for the purpose of allowing the Honourable the Minister of Finance (Mr. Nowlan) to make the Budget Presentation in accordance with the provision of section (1) of Standing Order 58, the Speaker could not leave the Chair without first putting the question: "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair".

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: With the greatest deference to the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre, I do not know whether he is able to read the mind of the Minister of Finance at this time but there is nothing which indicates to me either by a direct statement from the Minister of Finance or otherwise that he or any other Minister intends to make a Budget Presentation in the accepted sense of the term. That being the case, how can the Chair avoid the direction of the peremptory portion of Standing Order 58, the opening portion?

That is the difficulty the Chair faces at the moment. There is no latitude given to the Chair but for this one exception cited in the subsection, concerning which I have no knowledge, no indication, and certainly no statement from the Minister of Finance. Thus, with all due respect to the honourable Member, I am in the same position, I submit, as he is. Until the Minister of Finance says he is going to make a Budget Presentation, I have no alternative but to follow the rules and leave the Chair, and that is what I propose to do.

And debate continuing on the point of order;

MR. SPEAKER: On this point it is not that I am going to make a ruling at this moment and declare that any further discussion is superfluous, but I would like to direct the attention of honourable Members to the point, that what we have here is a question of order and it is not the question of the merits or demerits of whether there should be discussion or not. The question is whether, under this procedure that is proposed at the moment, the Speaker shall leave the Chair or not.

That is the narrow point of order, and I certainly would not be the one to say whether there is ample or insufficient opportunity to discuss the matters referred to. That is not the proposition at this moment. The ruling is in the light of the Standing Order, and I would earnestly submit to honourable Members that they should direct their attention to that point.

I have allowed pretty free discussion on both sides on that particular question, but I think we should come back to the interpretation of the Order as it is listed on the Order Paper—the effect of Standing Order 58—and also what are the requirements to go into a Budget Presentation as it affects the Speaker.

And debate continuing on the point of order;

MR. SPEAKER: As I said, it is not my purpose to deal with the merits of whether or not there shall be discussion. That is quite extraneous to the point of order. I would have hoped that honourable Members would have held themselves to that point.

We are faced here with Order No. 27 on the Order Paper, "House again in Committee of Ways and Means". We then deal with Standing Order 58, which, upon the House going into Committee of Ways and Means, says "Mr.