

accorded the point of order, or at other times the Chair makes a judgment as to what seems to be fair in the circumstances.

I am suggesting that the Deputy Speaker exercised that discretion and said that he was not, under all the circumstances, going to deduct that 20 minutes from the allocation of what constituted the eight hours. However, the fact that he exercised his discretion in that way in that particular instance does not mean that what the Acting Speaker went on to say is incorrect. I would submit that he was correct. He went on to say:

However, it is completely the tradition of the House that points of order, while they may not be taken from the debate time of an individual Member, are very definitely taken from the total allotted debate time on a motion. There is no question about that.

I submit that what the Acting Speaker said was correct. I would also submit that what the Deputy Speaker did was not at variance with that. He chose to exercise his discretion in a particular way, but the fact that he exercised his discretion in that way does not mean that the tradition of the House is changed.

Were we to have an approach where we could avoid having time allocated in calculating the amount of time spent on a debate by raising countless points of order, that would leave us open to gross abuses of the time of the House. I think it would inevitably lead to lengthy filibusters.

I suggest that there is no difference between what the Acting Speaker and the Deputy Speaker said and I support the position of the Acting Speaker. Nothing that was said by the Deputy Speaker really contravenes that.

**Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** Madam Speaker, as the person who was seeking the floor when this particular ruling was given, it was declared to me:

The Chair is not counting the 20-minute intervention against the eight hours.

That was not against my time but against the eight hours. That was stated at page 25480 of *Hansard*. My concern is that this is the first occasion we have had to consider the meaning of that eight hours. This is really the first opportunity.

• (1520)

It is conceivable that legitimate points of order might be raised for eight successive hours that ought to be devoted to debating an issue. If the ruling which seems to be hovering over our heads at the moment, namely that points of order should be included in the eight hours, comes to fruition then we would find there is no debate whatever on the motion before us.

I would remind you, Madam Speaker, that there is a slight variance in the amount of time consumed during that eight hours on Bill C-155. The Table has indicated to me that 63 minutes were used for points of order. Another timing done independently indicates that 66 minutes were used. In other words, for the consideration of this particular Bill, a very important Bill—which is also true of any Bill we consider, and I think this is a good time to resolve the matter—one full hour at least has been removed from debating time. That means six

speakers have had their debating time cut in two. Six speakers have lost one half of the time they might have otherwise had to elaborate matters—

**Mr. Chénier:** You are wasting time.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** I do not consider that an intervention of that sort is legitimate. I am not wasting time. We are considering a very important matter, namely the determination of what constitutes eight hours of debate.

My hon. colleague from Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) has made a number of points, as has the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans). All of these matters are germane to the issue before us. If we are going to have to live with this eight-hour business and 20-minute speeches followed by the ten-minute period for questions or comments, I think we should resolve this issue now because we have another six months to live with it. I think we should know now exactly what goes into those eight hours.

I will just remind you also, Madam Speaker, that when the Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker) came to make a ruling on the matter he differentiated very, very neatly between three issues that were before us. One was the determination of whether the eight hours was on the main motion only or on the main motion plus the amendment. The second was whether the ten-minute intervention for questions and comments would be included in the eight hours. Third was the inclusion or the non-inclusion of points of order in those eight hours of debate.

Finally, there is something that has me confused. I do not know how to interpret it and I bring it to your attention. It was mentioned briefly but indirectly by the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West.

The Acting Speaker said, as shown in the left-hand column on page 25483 of *Hansard*:

My ruling is always open to question.

It was my understanding, and we have been told so in very certain terms, that the Speaker's ruling is not open to question. The Acting Speaker has suggested—perhaps because he is the Acting Speaker—that his ruling is always open to question. I did not understand that at all. I think that matter ought to be taken into account. Possibly what he intended was that he was not really quite sure about this matter of points or order being included in the eight hours. Therefore, he felt that he should not make a definitive ruling on this occasion.

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Madam Speaker, on this same point of order and the approximately one hour that has been referred to taken up with points of order during second reading debate, may I suggest, with all respect, that the points of order raised had to do with the application of Standing Order 35. They were not aimed at either the content or the debate on the Bill before the House. They have to do only with the interpretation and application of Standing Order 35, particularly Standing Order 35(2)(b) having to do with how the eight-hour period is arrived at by the Chair.