

(2) When a debate on any motion made between 2:00 o'clock p.m. (11:00 o'clock a.m. Fridays) and prior to the reading of an order of the day is adjourned or interrupted, etc—

Madam Speaker, perhaps you could explain the expression: *between 2:00 o'clock p.m. and prior to the reading of an order of the day*, since in my opinion it is somewhat confusing. I noticed when I read the Standing Orders, which were not distributed until last Friday, that a change was made to make things a bit clearer.

Madam Speaker, like myself and so many other Members, you have consulted with your advisers on the subject of these technical and consequential amendments. In any case, on Friday, January 14, all Members received a copy of the revised and amended Standing Orders. I do not know how many Members read them. This morning and yesterday, I had a chance to look through the new edition and to absorb the essential points.

Madam Speaker, my point of order arises first of all from the very little time allowed Members to prepare for the debate which, I have been told, is to start this afternoon on Bill C-133, and to do so according to the new Standing Orders. More specifically, I would like to ask the Chair to consider interrupting the debate temporarily, to give Members a chance to talk to the Clerks and find out whether this new edition of Permanent and Provisional Standing Orders contains a number of technical and consequential amendments which might, for many of us, provide some clarification. Madam Speaker, I do not know whether I may continue my comments and raise a point of order under Standing Order 75(9) under the old rules, which allowed a Member proposing an amendment to speak for forty minutes at the report stage. Standing Order 75(9) prescribes, and I quote:

When debate is permitted, no Member shall speak more than once or longer than ten minutes during proceedings on any amendment at that stage—

I was reading the wording of the Standing Order as it appeared in the issue of the Committee on Standing Orders and Procedures.

Madam Speaker, that is clear: ten minutes at the report stage, but what worries me, and I wish you would provide some clarification on this point, is the practice according to which, for the purposes of debate, the Chair may combine amendments. If there are Members who, like me, for instance, have two amendments to propose at the report stage, I would like to know whether, if you combine them, I will have ten minutes to discuss two amendments which I consider important. Madam Speaker, I know that until today, there has been no ruling, no decision and no request made to the Chair about this matter. We used to have twenty minutes. Today, I only have ten. My speaking time is therefore very limited, and I wonder if you could inform the House whether, if you proceed according to former Standing Order 75(10)—I believe it provided for combining amendments or changes—you will give Members who are proposing more than one amendment a chance to speak for at least ten minutes to each amendment, even if the amendments have been combined.

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Furthermore, Madam Speaker, and this is the last point I wish to raise, I wonder whether you could perhaps give a ruling on the obligation for Members to present amendments to a bill at the report stage within twenty-four hours after the report is tabled. You may remember that on December 22, we adjourned at six o'clock. In my humble opinion, this was followed by a very long week-end, so that today, on January 17, we resumed debate at eleven o'clock this morning. Madam Speaker, I should therefore appreciate if you could inform the House whether the precedent set by Mr. Jerome in 1977 or 1978, which provided that in case of a week-end Members had until six o'clock on the following Monday to table amendments if a bill was reported to the House on a Friday, still applies. The week-end I am referring to started on Wednesday, December 22, but it was a very long week-end, since we are resuming our activities on January 17th, while we may still have some amendments to present. However, at this stage, Members cannot propose amendments to Bill C-133, which, according our information, will be called in a few minutes, unless you decide that we are entitled to propose amendments until six o'clock this evening.

• (1120)

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, in order to assist you in any remarks that you might deem advisable to make with respect to the intervention, perhaps the Hon. Member is unaware of the meetings that took place between the Government House Leader, myself and the House Leader for the New Democratic Party, other officials and party representatives, together with the Clerk of the House, in order to examine the technical and consequential changes that have been proposed by the Clerk, under the authority which was given to him by the motion which was passed.

One matter in particular that was mentioned by the hon. gentleman who has intervened with respect to the reference to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization concerning the words "between 60 and 90 days" was picked up by the Clerk and he has, as I had requested, written to the clerk of the Special Committee that presented the third report in order to clarify the intention of the Committee. To my knowledge, the Clerk has not yet received a response to that letter. However, I am sure that these minor matters will be picked up as we go. The experimental changes, as were the last ones, will be the subject of interpretations and will present problems, both minor and major, as we proceed through the experimental period. I would suggest that if the Hon. Member and all Hon. Members are patient, they will find that these things will iron themselves out in time.

With respect to the other matter raised by the hon. gentleman concerning the filing of amendments at report stage, my colleague from Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) will be raising