

Time Allocation

Mr. Gauthier: I am asking questions because my privileges have been infringed upon—

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Gauthier: It is not shame. I want to know from that Speaker why he recognized that Minister when I was up on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly) came in after the question was put by you, sat in his place and voted. That is not regular. Citation 223 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition makes the point very clearly and I want to read it to you:

A Member must be within the House and hear the question put in its entirety, in one of the official languages, or his vote cannot be recorded. It is not sufficient for him to hear it while he is in a gallery or behind the curtains.

• (1600)

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the Member for Comox—Powell River was not in his seat, did not hear the question and that, therefore, his vote should be scratched. That should have been dealt with before you recognized the Minister over there who, I do not know why, got the floor. It was a fix as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Rossi: It's a fix.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), of course. He may want to rise again. He makes a very fine contribution to this place and is more knowledgeable about rules than many other members. However, I should indicate that there is a plethora of precedent for recognizing the Hon. Minister. I refer specifically to May 16, 1984, when Mr. Speaker Francis was in the Chair. He said:

In accordance with established practices, when the Chair is to make a choice between a representative of the administration and the Government and another Member of the House, it is clear from Bourinot and parliamentary practice that the precedence goes to the representative of the administration who seeks to be recognized. That is the practice of Parliament and I am a servant of Parliament.

Some Hon. Members: But not on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister was recognized on Motions. I am indicating to all Members of the House that that is certainly not without precedent. There may be additional points of order raised and I am quite prepared to hear them. I will listen to the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary for a few minutes.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, with specific reference to my colleague, the Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly), I believe the Hon. Member was within the bar of the House when the vote was called. He was not in his seat, but as far as I am concerned—and I think I speak for my Party—the Hon. Member was certainly within the confines of the House when the vote was called and I think his vote should be counted.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I realize that we are taking up valuable time on the closure motion which has been dragooned into the House of Commons, I think inappropriately.

I want to ask a question and seek clarification from the Speaker. When the result of the vote was announced I rose in my place on a very important question of privilege. It has always been my understanding that a question of privilege takes precedence. Will the Speaker indicate whether that is the case and under what conditions he chose to ignore my question of privilege?

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief intervention as well.

Your Honour quite properly recognized the Minister under Motions. I do not think any Member of the House would disagree that that was in order. The difficulty is with respect to what followed. As I understand it, as the Minister rose and began to speak under Motions Members rose in the House with questions of privilege and points of order. Your Honour chose to allow the Minister to conclude reading the motion. That is one thing. However, I would submit that what happened at that point is totally unprecedented and really quite remarkable.

Instead of turning at that point to those members who had been seeking the floor on questions of privilege or points of order, your Honour chose to return to the Minister for debate. I respectfully suggest that when Members of this House are standing and attempting to seek the floor on questions of privilege and points of order, for your Honour to turn a blind eye to those members and instead recognize the Minister for debate at two minutes to four is not only unprecedented but completely out of order.

I have one further point to make, Mr. Speaker. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Lewis) gave notice of a motion. He indicated that he wished to proceed to Motions. My understanding is that the motion which was read by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre) was in fact a Government Notice of Motion. It was not a Private Member's Motion but a Government Notice of Motion.

Your Honour will note that under Routine Proceedings there is provision for Government Notices of Motions and following that there is provision for Motions. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council did not move that the House proceed to Government Notices of Motions. The Parliamentary Secretary moved: "That this House proceed to motions". In doing so he clearly bypassed all of the intervening proceedings including Government Notices of Motions.

Mr. Tobin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) has the floor and I am listening carefully to what he has to say and taking notes. While he is speaking I am consulting with the Table Officers. I heard somebody call for a point of