

fail to understand how there can still remain any doubt in the minds of some Members, that this 10-minute period is part of the debate. Standing Order 35(2)(b) which applies in this case reads as follows:

(b) twenty minutes following the first three speakers, if that Member begins to speak within the next eight hours of consideration—

If anyone suggests that the 10 minute question period following speeches is not a debate, I must wonder what we are doing in this House. It is a debate. It is simply a different type of debate. During the first 20 minutes, the Member makes his comments and in the next 10 minutes, there is an exchange, in other words a debate among members of this House on the speech just made.

I do not understand how the NDP Members who raised this issue can interpret the Standing Orders as they do, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that you could even make your ruling immediately since there is no doubt as to the interpretation of this Standing Order.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Chair will recognize the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), but unfortunately it is on the same point of order which, of course, is out of order. As the Hon. Member knows, it is not possible under the Standing Orders to rise a second time on the same point of order. However, it being Friday the thirteenth, we will conclude with the Hon. Member's remarks on something that he can consider a fresh point of order.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, it is an additional point to the original point of order in response to the comments of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet). The wording in the Standing Orders is very clear. It indicates that no Member shall speak for more than 20 minutes at any time in any debate. Then it says, and it says it twice in the rule:

● (1600)

Following the speech of each Member a period not exceeding ten minutes—

That is following the speech. It says in two places "following the speech". His speech was 20 minutes. Otherwise, 30-minute periods are counted against all Members in the House for the purpose of arriving at the eight hours of debate instead of 20-minute speeches. That is all we are suggesting. This would provide four additional Members, if they chose to use it, an opportunity to make a 20-minute speech instead of a 10-minute speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Obviously, as Hon. Members have indicated and have requested, the matter will be taken under consideration over the weekend and a decision will be rendered on Monday. It is appropriate that on Monday it be rendered as early as possible because, as indicated by the Hon. Member for Regina West and the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) in that order, we may be approaching, based upon how one does the calculation, a so-called eight-hour limit.

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I do not have the figures in front of me indicating at which point a decision would have to be made, but I am sure that Hon. Members in the House will understand that the decision from the Chair will be made before it puts any Hon. Member at a disadvantage with respect to the interpretation of the eight hours.

Now comes the part which may not be so satisfactory to some Hon. Members, but I want to indicate, so that Members have an opportunity to consider in advance, how the Chair will rule on Monday. Perhaps Hon. Members can be advantaged in that sense so that they may raise the matter further, if they wish, on Monday. I must say that the present occupant of the Chair is inclined toward the same interpretation of Standing Order 35(2)(b)—

[Translation]

—in both versions as the one given by the Hon. Member for Rosemont (Mr. Lachance). This means that I do not find much difference between the words "débat" in French and "consideration" in English.

[English]

My impression from a reading of both languages would indicate that the eight-hour limit would include the usage of ten-minute periods. However, that is not a final ruling. It is simply to advise the House that that is the present temperament of the Chair in reviewing the matter. There will be an opportunity for Hon. Members to raise the matter further on Monday. We will now continue with debate.

[Translation]

Mr. Loiselle: Mr. Speaker, after listening to those comments from Hon. Members well acquainted with procedural matters, I understand why this debate on the Crow rate policy has raised so much controversy. From what I have heard in the last few minutes, I can appreciate how something abundantly clear sometimes may become confusing for those who will not grasp simple matters.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) for his courage in addressing a policy which will have an impact all across the land, a policy that nobody else since 1897 had the courage to tackle. That policy has been vilified and abused even before it was made public. I am far from being an expert in transportation matters, although there are several farmers in my constituency. However, in my area of Quebec, on the south shore, I spend more time dealing with other matters besides agriculture. But this time I thought I had a golden opportunity to get to know the issue, or at least familiarize myself with that policy.

I was surprised at the language used by the opponents of the proposal. And I am referring especially to the so-called coalition in Quebec that is headed by Minister Garon. I am surprised and shocked that although the Minister of Transport has now bowed to the will of the caucus sub-committee headed by the Hon. Member for Lotbinière (Mr. Dubois), although he