

*Point of Order*

Orders. In the ruling of February 22, 1971, Mr. Speaker Lamoureux spoke of records showing that such situations had occurred in every regular session since 1952.

Mr. Speaker Lamoureux pointed out in the same ruling that the Standing Committees of the House of Commons at Westminster interrupt their proceedings in order to allow members to participate in divisions. It is only fair to add, however, that this is the usual practice in our committees. It is a voluntary action to suspend proceedings and respond to the bells.

*[Translation]*

I am concerned about the matter raised by hon. members but, in my view, it is neither a point of order nor a question of privilege. It is rather a grievance but a serious one and in light of the many instances where the matter has been raised on the floor, it is one that merits some attention by the House. Perhaps the Standing Committee on Elections and Privileges might consider the situation and decide whether or not to recommend changes to our rules.

*[English]*

Another issue relating to the bells was raised by the hon. member for Nickel Belt on January 30, 1990. He asked whether a 15 minute bell or a 30 minute bell is not required to sound for the full time provided in the Standing Order. In other words, he maintains that a 15 minute bell must ring for a full 15 minutes and a 30 minute bell for the full 30 minutes. With respect to this point, I should bring to the House's attention the wording of Standing Order 45. The relevant words are found in subsections (3) and (4). They are "—the bells to call in the Members shall be sounded for not more than fifteen minutes" or "—for not more than thirty minutes."

The important words appear to be, "for not more than", which would indicate that the bells can be sounded for any period of time which does not exceed the time mentioned in the Standing Order. It implies, however, that the time for the bells to ring may be less than the total stipulated. Thus, the process followed in the circumstances complained of was proper.

It is interesting to note that in the recent revisions of the Standing Orders creating legislative committees, those committees were given a prior right over that of

the Standing Committees to sit during sittings of the House. I am here referring to Standing Order 115, which I will read in part to the House.

(1) Notwithstanding Standing Order 108(1), no standing or standing joint committee shall sit at the same time as a legislative committee on a bill emanating from or principally affecting the same department or agency.

(2) During periods coinciding with the hours of sittings of the House, priority shall be given to the meetings of legislative committees over those of standing, special and joint committees.

*[Translation]*

The legislative committee thus has priority to sit over the standing committee but no provision is made for situations where the House is dealing with a bill or motion in a similar subject area as that before a committee.

The Chair has suggested that the Standing Committee on Elections and Privileges might also look at this issue to decide whether or not to make recommendations to the House to amend the rules in this area.

*[English]*

I wish to thank all hon. members for their assistance to the Chair in these matters. I must repeat that the Standing Orders, in practice, do not at this moment give the Chair authority to respond more positively to the hon. members' complaints.

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**POINT OF ORDER**

PARLIAMENT HILL—S.O. 52

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know normally during Routine Proceedings there would be a call for applications under Standing Order 52. While I am well aware of the requirements under Standing Order 52, the fact that a priest was dragged away from the front of the Parliament Buildings yesterday and arrested by the RCMP was going to encourage me to call for an emergency debate on this Draconian action.

• (1150)

In my anger and frustration, myself and a number of my colleagues actually went out in front of the Parliament Buildings this morning to see if we would be arrested as the ordinary citizens of the country were arrested yesterday, only to find out that we were not.