

Besides the prohibitions contained in S.O. 35, it has been sanctioned by usage that a Member, while speaking, must not:

(c) refer to the presence or absence of specific Members;—

I would ask if you would reflect upon the meaning of "specific". It is clearly appropriate in the House of Commons, as a result of normal usage, to refer to the absence of Members, provided one does not specify exactly which Member is absent. I would like you, not necessarily to rule at the moment, but to consider that it is appropriate for a Member to rise in the House of Commons or during the course of a speech to draw to your attention the fact that there is no one from the Cabinet present. That does not refer to a specific Member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The first point the Chair would like to make is that the original point of order raised by the Hon. Member for Elgin was directed at the Minister responsible for youth, which was quite specific. Second, Citation 316(c) reads:

—refer to the presence or absence of specific Members;—

This leads to some interpretation. It does not say "specific Member" but "specific Members". It was the interpretation of the Chair that the Cabinet is certainly of a plural nature. In any event, the point has certainly been made three, four or five times, regardless of the rules. I suggest we continue the debate.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make an intervention on the point of order. This has been an interesting exchange. Under our rules, we are now involved in an allotted day which is very much a matter of supply. It is a matter of the members of the administration defending the spending of their departments.

The motion before us is a condemnatory motion relating to the Government's lack of policy with regard to youth unemployment. Accordingly, it becomes an important ingredient in terms of that whole process to determine whether the Government has any member of its administration present in the House to answer. The same point was raised and an undertaking was given by the Government with respect to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) not being available to discuss estimates before the committee. The Government understood the gravity of that allegation and gave an undertaking to see what could be done so that that Minister would be before the committee.

We are now sitting in the House of Commons and having a discussion on the floor of the House of Commons with respect to supply. Without casting reflections on any individual Members or the reason they are not here, it strikes me that the convention of the House is always that the administration, the Cabinet, the executive, are here on the floor of the House of Commons prepared to answer questions and defend the Government's position *vis-à-vis* the motion on the floor. That is the crux of what we are doing here today. We are not reflecting on the absence *per se*.

We say that the Government cares so little about this topic that it cannot even spare a couple of Ministers to be on the floor of the House of Commons to defend its position on youth unemployment, and I think that is shameful.

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The Chair would only remark that while the Hon. Member was labouring his point, the Chair was able to see that Cabinet is now represented in the House of Commons. If we could get back to the debate, it would be appreciated. The Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody.

Mr. St. Germain: Mr. Speaker, are we on debate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): We are on debate. The time allowed for questions and comments has now expired. We are back on debate on the motion. The Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I gather that you were about to recognize the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody for debate. While I would not want in any way to impede him in his desire to make a speech, the normal practice has not been to recognize two members of one Party, one after the other. In debate on Opposition days, it has frequently been that the two Opposition Parties express their point of view and then the Government responds. I would suggest that although it is quite legitimate to recognize the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody now, it might be better to recognize him later in the debate.

• (1140)

Mr. de Corneille: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to support that same point. My reason is that I am sitting over on this side and I was assuming that you were recognizing the member of the NDP at this time, Mr. Speaker. However, I would also like to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The Chair realizes that a member of each Party is supposed to speak on the first round. With all due respect, perhaps the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody would yield the floor to the representative of the New Democratic Party. Would that be agreeable?

Mr. St. Germain: Agreed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain) and I appreciate his courtesy. I would like to take a few moments to discuss the topic that is before us this morning. I believe it is a very complex topic. There is no doubt in my mind that it is one of the most important problems confronting Canadians at this time.

The question of providing adequate employment is a question that bedevils everyone in politics. I think it would be unfair to suggest that there is one simple solution that will automatically resolve the problem. I do not pretend for one moment to think that from the moment whichever of the political Parties comes to power, there would automatically be a job for everyone. I say "a job for everyone" advisedly because I do believe that unless, as a matter of principle, political Parties in Canada and perhaps in other parts of the world intend to ensure that every Canadian available for work