

Defence Production Act

An hon. Member: It is a virtue.

Mr. Pouliot: The fact that one prefers to remain silent rather than to speak cannot be held against him, because it would be a good example to all the members of the opposition.

Mr. Nowlan: In that case, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot) would say that if they remain silent twice, the rule of repetition can be invoked against them. I think there would be that real danger, that you might be accused of repetition if you remained silent too long.

What I am concerned about with regard to this point of order is this. Frankly it intrigues me and bothers me, because I feel that if this ruling is accepted which has been made by Your Honour, with Your Honour's background and wide knowledge of the rules, then I suggest with deference that it is a little bit novel, shall we say, to some of us.

I wonder why there ever was a closure rule in this House of Commons if repetition cannot be indulged in. You do not need a rule concerning closure because you are automatically cut off by your rule against repetition. I am remembering, this rule having come in in 1927, that between 1930 and 1935, on unemployment insurance we had a debate of 48 days. There was no time limit during part of that debate.

What I am wondering is this. Perhaps the members of the House of Commons then were more brilliant in those days than they are today, but I cannot conceive of a situation where somebody did not repeat some argument that someone else had used. I am wondering if the Speaker ruled against them on that score. I am rather intrigued with the question raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre as to precedents. Surely if my friend the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, coming from the west coast, uses an argument in his forcible and dramatic way, which undoubtedly will be much superior to that which I could raise, is Your Honour suggesting that because I come from the east coast I cannot indulge in the same argument, that I would be foreclosed because of repetition? Frankly I think that ruling, if it is as I think Your Honour is trying to state it now, is going much further than it has ever gone before. With deference I suggest that we should question it quite closely.

Mr. McIvor: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would say that I feel even the Prime Minister would admit that it would be difficult to improve on the statement made

by the Minister of Defence Production. I should like to hear the hon. member for Brandon-Souris, to see if he has new material, because he has brains.

Mr. Speaker: May I say a word to put at ease the minds of the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green) and the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings (Mr. Nowlan). Whenever the Speaker rises some hon. members seem to think he always makes a ruling. There is a rule, standing order 12, however, that he shall preserve order and decorum. The moment he believes a rule is about to be violated he must warn the hon. member, and that is all I am doing. I feel I have full justification for that, because I have heard hon. members say and have read in *Hansard* during this debate exactly what the hon. member indicated he was about to do, that is to make an appeal to the Prime Minister to speak in this debate. He was going to give reasons for that, and I take it other members have done so.

I believe I have indicated that I base this suggestion on standing order No. 40, subsection 2. I claim that if the mention of repetition in subsection 2 is ever to mean anything or has ever meant anything, it is in a situation such as that which has just arisen. It may be because this rule is difficult to administer that it has not been invoked as often as hon. members perhaps would think in this house. In the United Kingdom, where a rule exactly the same as we have, with the exact wording as we had it prior to 1927, does exist, it is often invoked by the Speaker. See United Kingdom Commons' standing order 20, as it appears in May, fifteenth edition, page 1025. See also United Kingdom debates, 1404-1419, December 3, 1953.

There is also another point which I did not mention, and which the hon. member for Brandon-Souris and others should keep in mind. It is that all government bills could easily be in the name of the Prime Minister, yet it could be one of his colleagues who would move second reading for him. Since relevancy is to obtain in any debate, I would ask hon. members of what use it is to bring that up in the debate and say that a minister should or should not speak instead of the Prime Minister. Hon. members know very well that there are some bills that are introduced by the Prime Minister. This one concerns the extension of a department and it appears in his name, but it does not necessarily follow that the minister in whose name the bill appears is the minister who will have to move the various stages of the bill. Is it relevant to the principle of a bill to make extended remarks on the point that the minister or the