

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member has been in this House for quite a long period of time. I am sure that he does know that hon. members are not supposed to enter the chamber while a division is being taken. This has been within our rules for a long time.

The hon. member from Kamloops on the same point of order.

Mr. Riis: I just want to make it very clear. On many occasions over the years members have entered, and at the end of the vote indicated their intentions as to how they would have voted had they been in the chamber.

If, in fact, earlier in the day I entered the House of Commons at an inappropriate moment, and I accept that fact that it is a tradition that we have in this House, I for one want to apologize for doing that.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East) Madam Speaker, I am afraid that I cannot let the remarks of the hon. member from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte pass unchallenged at this time.

He said that we were challenging the authority of the Chair. I can assure the Chair that in raising the original point of order, I had no intention, none whatsoever, of challenging the Chair. In fact I do not consider that anything I said at that time could be construed as a challenge to the Chair.

If by chance the hon. member was referring to the remarks of other of my colleagues, I can only say that nothing in any of those remarks could reasonably be construed as a challenge to the authority of the Chair, especially when in the case of the hon. member from Juan de Fuca, he was suggesting that the Chair take the time of the House to—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Regina—Lumsden was seeking the floor.

• (1750)

Mr. Benjamin: Madam Speaker, it is against the rules to challenge the Chair. It has been for a number of years. We cannot challenge the Chair. Nobody has.

In light of the fact that my wife is expecting—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Benjamin: —could I have the unanimous consent of the House to call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Consent has not been given. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. Benjamin: Do I have unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member was not given unanimous consent to call it six o'clock. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. Barrett: Madam Speaker, I was not suggesting that the Chair knows everything immediately. What I was suggesting was a recess. Your compromise is perfectly acceptable. But I want to say that I resent the editorial comment that somehow I was challenging the Chair or expecting the Chair to know every answer.

What I said was, take a five minute recess. The suggestion you have made is totally acceptable. But I do not accept the questioning of my motives when I raise a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I had not been questioning the hon. member's motives, and I do thank him very much for finding my suggestion quite acceptable. On debate, the hon. member for Calgary West.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, it is a very unusual period in the history of the Parliament of—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): On a point of order, the hon. member for Churchill.

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, I certainly do not want to leave the remarks of the Liberal member unchallenged, because I was one of the people who rose and asked for a clarification of what the Speaker was ruling. The very fact that later on in that process the Speaker felt it necessary to withhold judgment indicates that what we were raising was quite valid. Upon hearing the arguments of members of the New Democratic Party caucus, and hearing other remarks, the Chair felt it necessary to reserve judgment. I know that the Chair also had the opportunity to have a few words with the Clerk and again it was obviously a situation where there was a feeling that the whole issue was in doubt.