

Madam Speaker: Order, order!

● (1530)

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, if the system is to work at all—

Mr. Rae: You shut it down for weeks.

Mr. Nielsen: I would urge those yappy people in the socialist party to yap through their House leader instead of interrupting me as they are doing now.

If the Chair permits this practice, the system will break down. I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that it is the simplest thing in the world—

An hon. Member: Thank you, Erik.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: Perhaps they could stop howling. Everyone can speak except them; that is their idea of free speech in this House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: If they would stop yapping so that you could hear me, Madam Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Yukon has the floor.

Mr. Nielsen: I would like to suggest to you that the Chair recognize the House leaders of the three parties for the purpose of dealing with House business, except in very rare circumstances.

It is very simple for us to do what has been done by the little red rump—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: —and organize a series of questions just like the series we have been treated to now. Indeed, if the Chair allows this procedure, and I do not say this in any way at all threateningly, Madam Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: —but if this practice is going to be allowed those on my left, I can assure you that we will do it also. I will not keep my members down.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: I will invite them to participate freely in asking those questions which concern them as individuals as well. I suggest to the Chair that we adopt a policy of working these questions through the House leaders except in very rare circumstances; otherwise there will be chaos.

Business of the House

Madam Speaker: The suggestion that the House leaders discuss this matter I think is a very good one. I just want to remind hon. members that I cannot keep members sitting down; when they rise to ask for the floor, I must give them the floor. Members are allowed to ask questions on government business. Members should be concise and their questions should be to the point. They should not make speeches. I will see to it that speeches do not evolve from their questions. However, I do ask hon. members to co-operate with their House leaders. That is indeed the best way to run the affairs of the House.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: This would not have happened had Stanley Knowles been here.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I have a quick question.

Mr. Shields: Ask it then.

Mr. Waddell: Many of us spent the holidays—

An hon. Member: Ask the question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Waddell: If hon. members will let me ask the question, I will ask the question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Waddell: Many of us spent the holidays in our riding offices. People came in day in and day out to complain about the government's economic policy.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. We do not need a preamble. If the hon. member has a question about government business, he can go right to the question. For example, he can say: "Does the government intend to introduce legislation about . . .," and so on.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, does the government intend to introduce legislation that would alleviate the problems of the older people in the country, specifically by increasing the old age pension this term so that they will not continue to suffer? They have been telling us day in and day out that they have been suffering, with current interest rates and the general state of inflation in the economy.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, this government is eager to proceed with a major bill, namely Bill C-85. It deals with the promotion of agricultural food and products from Canada. We are ready to work. Because of the attitude of the NDP, we cannot do so. It is a shame.

Mr. Korchinski: Madam Speaker, because there was a realignment of responsibility in DREE, we do not know to whom we should direct our questions. Can the government House leader tell us whether there will be legislation which will authorize someone to speak on behalf of DREE? Do we ask the former minister or the Minister of Regional Economic