

that this is not the point at which it can be advanced. The Chair does not have the discretion to hear argument or debate on the matter at this time. I will hear the hon. member further on the point of order if he has anything to say with regard to it, but I must tell him this is not the time at which the Chair can make a determination of the point he has raised.

Mr. Peters: I am not in a position to raise this matter with Mr. Speaker at this time, but I am raising it with you, Mr. Chairman, and I expect you to report to Mr. Speaker the representation I have made. This situation is a left-over from the changes made in the rules. It is a stupid, silly kind of process to go through when members do not have the opportunity of discussing the matter.

The Chairman: The Chair has noted the hon. member's point of order and it will be conveyed to Mr. Speaker as requested. It is within the competence of hon. members to change the procedure under our Standing Orders if they, in their wisdom, think this ought to be done. But they cannot be changed at this point. I must follow the Standing Orders and continue the proceedings in committee of the whole.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

We have just received copies of the bill and a while ago I respectfully asked you a question. I would like to know whether it is true that I can rise on a question of privilege or raise a point of order. I would like you to tell me now what are my rights.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Chairman, I would like you to help me continue my remarks by calling members opposite to order.

[English]

The Chairman: I have indicated to the hon. member that there is no opportunity for debate at this point in the proceedings. Like the hon. member who preceded him, the hon. member has raised a point of order and registered what is, in effect, a grievance against the Standing Orders. It has been noted. I repeat, it is not within my competence or, indeed, within the competence of hon. members to deal at the stage of committee of the whole with this point of order. But it has been noted and, with respect, that is really all the Chair can do at this point.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Chairman, may I be permitted to raise a further point of order? I do not want to hinder the Chairman in carrying out his responsibilities, but I should like to point out that all members of the House are being asked to vote on each item submitted to them. Since only a few members have a copy of the bill, how can we be expected to vote when we do not know the items? Furthermore, before we pass these items I should like to ask whether the government will ensure that each member does have a copy.

Interim Supply

The Chairman: Order, please. The hon. member has in essence raised the same point of order raised by the hon. member for Lotbinière and by the hon. member for Timiskaming. I can only repeat that I have heard their representations. There may well be a great deal of sympathy for them. But this is not the proper time to make them, though the representations have been noted. With respect, as Chairman of the committee I have no jurisdiction to change the procedure established by the Standing Orders.

Mr. Nielsen: Where is the bill we are voting on?

The Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Let us not have talk about Standing Orders—

The Chairman: Order, please. If hon. members want me to read the Standing Order—

Some hon. Members: Read the bill.

The Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Chairman, I will be heard.

The Chairman: Order. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): With the greatest respect, Mr. Chairman, I suggest there is not one word in the Standing Orders about the distribution or non-distribution of bills before their acceptance. My colleague for Sainte-Marie merely raised the point that it is impossible to have intelligent consideration of a request to pass a bill without copies of the bill being distributed. I put it to you again that since the procedure of the House is under the control of the Chair, the time to make representations regarding the distribution of a bill is now, so that the Chair becomes aware of them. There is no other time for an individual member to raise such a point of order. The point is germane at this time and I suggest my colleague for Sainte-Marie was perfectly right in making the suggestion he did.

The Chairman: Order, please. I understand the point made by the hon. member for Edmonton West and I have a great deal of sympathy for this point of order. The hon. Member supports the hon. member for Sainte-Marie, and the same point of order was made by the hon. member for Lotbinière and the hon. member for Timiskaming. As I perceive it, the points of order are essentially the same, and personally I have a great deal of sympathy with them. My position as Chairman is that hon. members may raise, if they wish, points of order ad infinitum. But I have no jurisdiction at this point to correct or rectify the matters about which they complain. They may be very valid matters. I think it is very