

*Privilege*

Mr. Speaker, you are to be the protector of those rules. That is why I appeal to you under my privileges and those of my group to protect us from those kinds of Senate oriented habits it has acquired. The way the Senate is doing it is the same bloody practice that the government wants to put here in the House of Commons. We will object to that as strenuously as we can.

I appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, to use your good judgment and your good offices to think this through and, based on what you have told me before, to try to come to grips with what is an agreement. It is not a debate. It is a process of consultation.

I am not debating with the government side as to whether or not we should or should not have time allocation. I am just saying that consultation with the opposition is required by the Standing Orders. They must be followed if we are to follow the rules, and I appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, to rule this notice as void and null, and absolutely non-existent.

**Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, in listening to my hon. friend I must say that I am almost persuaded by his very eloquent argument.

However, as I think anyone who spent any time in this House will know, there are always two sides to every debate and every question. In this case this is no exception. There are in fact two sides to the question.

It is interesting that in the four years prior to 1984 the government which the hon. member was a part of used time allocation and closure some 26 times. My information is that in the six years following that date we have hit an anniversary: we too have used it 26 times. Unfortunately, we were two years longer in that process than were the Liberals when they were in government. My point is this—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** The matter that has been raised is not an easy one. I have to interpret the orders as they are written.

It does not help the Chair and it does not help the reputation of this place, when the hon. parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Kamloops, or anybody else is arguing a difficult and technical point, that some other member who is in general disagreement with the

position taken but is not engaged in the technical and difficult debate is shouting from his or her seat.

Please, I ask hon. members to assist the Chair and to do it in a civilized and careful way. The country is desperately looking to some place where these things can be done and are done in a civilized way. I know that hon. members are very conscious of that, and I know that I can count on their co-operation.

• (1130)

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make is that in fact what has happened is time allocation and closure. These are the rules which are provided for our use in this House. They have become part of our operating system and have been used for more than 10 years. It is interesting that today it balances out, 26 times in the previous four years prior to 1984, and six times since.

It is interesting to read Standing Orders 78.(1), (2) and (3). I would like to refer to phrases in them. In Standing Order 78.(1) it states there is an agreement. In 78.(2) it states that the majority of the representatives of the several parties have come to an agreement. However, Standing Order 78.(3) says in the third line that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of the previous sections.

What is interesting about that particular wording is that it mentions an agreement but it does not mention the process. That is very crucial here. It is very central to the issue we are discussing at the moment. The reason it is so crucial is that it does not say or lay out a process that has to be followed with a little check list, and at the end of that check list one says the check list is completed, therefore this action takes place.

There is a very important reason, I believe, why the drafters of the Standing Order chose that particular wording. Essentially, what we are up against is that in order to have an agreement, you have to have a conversation. You have to have a discussion. However, there have been times, and it is not only today, but at other times in the past, that it is impossible to have that conversation. Therefore, just because that particular conversation does not take place does not mean that there have not been attempts for consultation and that the requirements of Standing Order 78.(1) and (2) have not been fulfilled.