

Oil Substitution Act

ing what constitutes debate. Yesterday, the Chair made a ruling on the 10-minute period allowed after a Member's speech. I recall clearly that Your Honour said the questions and comments allowed following debate are not debate as such but rather a period outside debate.

Hon. Members are all aware that we have eight hours of debate, which includes the 20-minute speeches. These eight hours, however, also cover the 10-minute comments or questions following a Member's speech. There may also be points of order or questions of privilege. All of these are included in the eight hours. We are now nearing the end of the traditional eight hours of debate on Bill C-24. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Chair exactly what debate is. I submit that debate is a Member's speech plus the questions and comments relating to that speech. That is debate, and if I am right, yesterday, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) was rising during the normal period of debate and therefore had a right to move the motion of adjournment as he did. Mr. Speaker, I should therefore be grateful if you would explain to me and the other Liberal Members of this House what debate means. How are we to define debate, and is, according to yesterday's ruling, the 10-minute question and answer period not to be considered debate? What exactly are those ten minutes? And does the Chair intend to continue to count the 20-minute speeches, the 10-minute periods plus all points of order and questions of privilege as part of the eight hours?

Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, we shall have to bear that in mind. However I submit, with respect, that if we are supposed to have eight hours of debate, we should subtract the ten minutes of questions and comments and questions of privilege and points of order. Mr. Speaker, I also submit that it must be clearly understood what the Standing Orders mean in relation to a matter that is very important to us all.

● (1210)

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for his intervention. I expected an argument which would begin the way the Hon. Member began his argument, given what I had to say yesterday.

Yesterday, the Hon. President of the Privy Council (Mr. Hnatyshyn) raised a point of order as to whether or not the time taken by the ringing of the bells prior to voting on the motion to adjourn the House should be counted as part of the eight hours of debate on Bill C-24 during which 20-minute speeches are followed by 10-minute question and answer periods. The Hon. Minister quoted a precedent whereby it was ruled that the time taken by the ringing of the bells was counted as part of the two hours of debate allowed on a motion moved under former Standing Order 75(c), now Standing Order 82. The last sentence of Standing Order 82 reads:

Not more than two hours after the commencement of proceedings thereon, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the said motion.

That wording seems to me to be quite clear. No similar wording, however, is to be found in Standing Order 35(2) which deals with the length of speeches during the second reading of a Bill.

We have a precedent dating from May, 1983, which indicates that the time taken by bell ringing was not counted in the eight-hour period of debate. On May 17, 1983, 84 minutes of the eight-hour period were left on the debate on Bill C-151, the Borrowing Authority Bill. After five minutes of debate, the motion that the House do now adjourn was moved and the bells rang for six hours and forty-eight minutes. The adjournment motion lapsed at the ordinary hour of adjournment and the next time the Bill was debated, on May 26, the Bill was debated for a further 79 minutes during which 20-minute speeches followed by 10-minute question and answer periods were allowed.

I think that the validity of this precedent can also be borne out by reference to the authorities. At page 385 of Erksine May's twentieth edition, it is clearly indicated that a motion for the adjournment of the House, or of the debate, is a distinct question which interrupts and supersedes the question already under consideration.

In Abraham and Hawtrey's *Parliamentary Dictionary*, under the heading "Dilatory Motion", it is stated:

A dilatory motion is a superseding motion because if it is accepted by the Speaker he proposes the motion as a new question which supersedes the original question and must be disposed of before the debate on the original question can be resumed.

The authorities cited, of course, were not dealing with a procedure which allows for the unlimited ringing of the bells. However, in the light of these citations and our own precedents, I believe it is logical to conclude that the time taken by the ringing of the bells prior to voting on an adjournment motion should not be counted in the time allocated to the debate on second reading of the Bill under Standing Order 35(2).

Therefore, there remains one hour and three minutes of debate on Bill C-24 during which 20-minute speeches may be followed by 10-minute question and answer periods.

I do suggest, however, that the question of the bells is a problem which needs to be addressed, and one hopes it is on the agenda of the special committee on reform of the House of Commons.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I rose the other day to take part in the debate on Bill C-24 and I did make a motion to adjourn the House. Therefore, I gather, I lose my chance to continue my debate. It seems to me that if the ten-minute question and comment period is not part of debate, as Your Honour has ruled, it would seem that I am available for ten minutes of questions and comments. I did make reference when I opened my speech to this particular Bill, and what it said.

Mr. Speaker: There has been a certain amount of creativity in the House over the last day or two. The House is observing the Speaker think.