

S. O. 29

by the government side. There certainly have been a great many questions and statements made with respect to free trade.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can do something which I felt I had to do many months ago, that is, dispel any Hon. Members from thinking that just by the numbers of people rising they are necessarily going to persuade the Chair that it is an emergency.

Mr. Langdon: I am pleased to hear that admonishment to the Minister, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the subject, and I raise this very seriously, in the last week we have had a tremendous charade take place in this country, and a series of "toings" and "froings"—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member does know that the application that he brings with respect to an emergency debate on the trade talks is a matter that is viewed with great seriousness by the Chair, and I am sure by all Hon. Members in this place. The application has to be made directly. The Hon. Member will realize, for the reasons I set out, that under the rules the Government is not given any permission or right to reply, the Hon. Member will make his statement very briefly and not in an argumentative fashion. I can assure the Hon. Member that the Chair understands his position very well.

Mr. Langdon: I do not make these points in any attempt to argue with the Government, but simply to point out that there is a great urgency for the country as a whole and for us as parliamentarians to be able to discuss this issue in a forum that is more open to detailed discussion and probing in detail than is possible during Question Period.

On Monday, there were seven and a half hours of negotiation in the United States, and apparently yesterday Cabinet negotiated for 11 hours. We have not had any statement from the Government, as I expected would come at some stage this week.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister on a point of order.

Mr. Lewis: I do not wish to interrupt the Hon. Member, and I hesitate to do so. I am not going to engage in debate, but I simply wish to ask the following. It is my understanding that in order to invoke Standing Order 29 an Hon. Member must give to the Speaker, "at least one hour prior to raising it in the House, a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed".

Under Standing Order 29(3) it states that "the Member shall rise in his or her place and present without argument—"

Under Standing Order 29(4) it states, "The Speaker shall decide, without any debate—" I would simply ask, since this arises as a result of a letter, whether the remarks of my hon.

friend should not pertain exactly to what was written to you in requesting the debate.

• (1540)

Mr. Speaker: I think I can help the Hon. Minister. I think I have to say to the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) that the Hon. Minister is correct. I have the Hon. Member's point and I am again today not of a disposition to grant an emergency debate tonight.

I say again that that does not mean that the Hon. Member and other Hon. Members are precluded from bringing applications another time. For now, for the reasons, as I mentioned yesterday, which I have in my head and do not always allow out of my head, today there will be no emergency debate. However, that does not mean that there might not be one at some further time.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would simply like to have clarified whether it is the usual rule in circumstances such as this to be able to put one's case, albeit briefly, or whether it is commonplace or indeed allowable under the rules to have that case interrupted by a Government Minister seeking to stomp the full presentation.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can assist the Hon. Member by remarking that any Member at almost any time can rise on a point of order and call the attention of the House to the rules. Sometimes Hon. Members do that before the Chair does it. The Chair has been known to allow at least some latitude at times. However, as I said, strictly speaking, the Hon. Minister of State (Mr. Lewis) is correct. The Chair has allowed and may well continue to allow sufficient comment when the application is made so that the position of the Member is clear. Applications sometimes come in for emergency debates and they are not much more elucidating than the words, "Dear Mr. Speaker, I want an emergency debate on something, thank you very much, sincerely". It may well be that it is helpful to the Chair to hear at least a few comments, but I think the Hon. Member and other Hon. Members will accept that when it gets beyond argument or when a government Member quite correctly rises to say that perhaps the Chair is allowing too much latitude in comments on the application, then I think we have to take that into account.

The rules are there and I think the Minister of State was within his rights in drawing them to the attention of the House. In any event, as the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor knows, I have heard him in the past and I know that he knows that I will hear him in the future.

[Translation]

I should like to advise the House that because of the Minister's statement, government orders will be extended by 10 minutes.