

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

(Mr. Maltais) can answer questions coming from anyone. I hope that one day the Members opposite will remain in their seat so that we on this side can show them how incompetent and vulnerable they are.

[English]

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I do not think we can let the point raised by the Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Veillette) and the Minister (Mr. Chrétien) go unchallenged. The Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) did not run away. The Hon. Member for—

Mr. Deans: I saw him running.

Mr. Taylor: —Joliette answered all the questions that came to him. Then the questions switched to another Member. The only reason the Hon. Member for Joliette left is that he had an important appointment.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Taylor: There was no precedent for questions after the ten-minute period. Had there been such a precedent, the Hon. Member would have made arrangements to be here. However, he stayed here and answered every question which was put to him. Let us get the record straight. Another point is that the Hon. Member for Joliette will never be afraid of any question coming to him from a Liberal, never.

Mr. Deans: I rise on a point of order. I am really enjoying this little family squabble.

Mr. Darling: Are you not part of the family?

Mr. Deans: However, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we would not have to ask questions of the Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Veillette) if the Minister were here.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, it appears that after 14 hours of debate in which 64 Hon. Members spoke, the House, on giving unanimous consent on a number of occasions to discuss other issues of importance beside Bill C-133, may be disposed to give unanimous consent to pass Bill C-133 so that we could then revert to asking these questions.

Mr. Deans: No, I can assure you that is not forthcoming.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Parliamentary Secretary had in mind except, perhaps, mischief. However, I repeat I am sorry that what had been a reasonably sane atmosphere in the House of Commons with respect to a good Question Period had to be overcharged, should I put it that way, or tarnished by the efforts of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien). We were doing quite well without him. We were having a very intelligent discussion about a very important matter—

Mr. Deans: And then the Minister arrived.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): —until he came along and, in his usual way, he managed to trivialize it and turn it into a partisan row, which it was not intended to be. It was intended

to be a series of questions following a speech, and I repeat what I said earlier.

Mr. Chrétien: Who spoke last?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I will say that the Hon. Member for Manicouagan (Mr. Maltais) has done a good job; I will not argue with that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): He has done his very best to defend the indefensible, and that takes skill—

Mr. Chrétien: Who spoke last?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): —because the Government's record is indefensible. He has done his very best with respect to it, but I repeat that no one wants this to go on forever, certainly. However, the precedent has now been established, and I think a very important one, that when issues are raised now, even on report stage, there are questions that come to Hon. Members' minds which, for the purpose of advancing debate, had better be answered, all of them, that the reservation on this precedent in terms of questioning is not, as it is on second and third reading, directed to the Hon. Member who sat down, but that Hon. Members who intervene can also be questioned. This does not take away at all the right of the Chair to deal with the question if it becomes irrelevant, if it does not deal with the proposition. I think the Chair always has that right.

However, the precedent has been established concerning unanimous consent being sought and given when the questions are relevant to the issue. Certainly the issue involving old age pensioners, retired Canadians, and particularly, in this case, public servants, in relation to unemployment and inflation, has been the great issue before committee concerning how they could cope with this situation.

Mr. Deans: This is another ten-minute speech.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): That has been an issue and these questions were relevant.

I want to repeat what I said to Your Honour and to commend you, if I may do so, for seeing the importance of debate of a nature which can take place during Report Stage.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier on a question of privilege.

[English]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I rose 15 minutes ago asking that we go back to discussing Bill C-133. I did not see anyone rising on the motion which was grouped, the motion by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker), and that of the President of the Treasury