

Cyril and Methodius of Slovaks of the Byzantine Rite in Canada, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

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[Translation]

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pepin that Bill C-155, to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Benjamin (p. 25389).

Mr. Bernard Loiselle (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, it is with—

[English]

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not one who abuses the Chair or the Table on points of order regarding the rules, but I would like to ask you if you would take under advisement the question of debate at second reading, the time taken up thereon and the time limits placed upon speakers. I understand that the eight-hour limit of 20-minute speeches includes the ten minutes taken up with questions and comments of an Hon. Member following the end of his 20-minute speech.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to take into consideration Standing Order 35(1) which reads as follows:

35. (1) Unless otherwise provided in these Standing Orders, when the Speaker is in the Chair, no Member, except the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, or a Minister moving a government order and the Member speaking in reply immediately after such Minister, or a Member making a motion of "no-confidence" in the government and a Minister replying thereto, shall speak for more than twenty minutes at a time in any debate.

The next words are crucial:

Following the speech of each Member a period not exceeding ten minutes shall be made available, if required, to allow Members to ask questions and comment briefly on matters relevant to the speech and to allow responses thereto.

You will note it says "Following the speech of each Member", which according to the previous wording is to last not more than 20 minutes.

In Standing Order 35(2), at the bottom of page 27, we find a repetition which reads:

(2) When second reading of a government bill is being considered, no Member except the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition shall speak for more than:

- (a) forty minutes if that Member is the first, second or third speaker;
- (b) twenty minutes following the first three speakers, if that Member begins to speak within the next eight hours of consideration; and following the speech of each Member a period not exceeding ten minutes shall be made available, if required, to allow Members to ask questions and comment briefly on matters relevant to the speech and to allow responses thereto;—

It seems to me that means that only the 20-minute speeches of Members at second reading following the first three speakers should be counted in the eight-hour limit, and that the ten minutes for questions and responses is not part of an Hon.

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Member's 20-minute speech, because the rule says "Following the speech of each Member". That is stated in both Standing Order 35(1) and Standing Order 35(2)(b). The 20-minute speech is the speech and the ten minutes are for questions and answers following, which is not part of the speech. The words are quite clear.

I make this point on the basis that if the ten minutes of questions, responses and comments are not counted as part of a Member's 20 minutes—and I do not think they should be because I believe it has already occurred that another Member has taken up most of the ten minutes with comment and it was not part of the Hon. Member's speech—I do not think that the ten-minute question and response portion can be properly construed as part of the eight-hour time limit. Only 20 minute speeches of Hon. Members shall make up the eight-hour period, not the additional ten minutes of questions and responses.

I would ask you to take this point under advisement, Mr. Speaker, because I know you and the Table are meticulously keeping track of the hours and the minutes taken up by all Hon. Members.

In fairness to all Hon. Members there are those who would be penalized by time taken up at an earlier stage in the debate that had nothing to do with the 20-minute speech time of a previous speaker.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I have listened very carefully to what my friend was saying and I have looked at the words of the revised Standing Orders. I am inclined to think that the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) makes a reasonable submission of which the Chair ought to take cognizance. It is not one of those things that the Chair has to decide today but this matter will have to be decided fairly quickly. Perhaps it could be considered over the weekend.

I will not add to the argument of my hon. friend, but I will suggest for the guidance of the Chair that the Chair consider page 14 of the third report of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure. Item 3, "Length of Speeches", reads this way:

Your Committee is of the opinion that the time limits on speeches should be shortened wherever the standing orders provide for 40-minute (except as provided in the recommendation hereunder relating to second reading of Government Bills) and 30-minute time limits and that an effort should be made to introduce greater spontaneity and more cut and thrust into debate. Your Committee proposes that these speeches be limited to 20 minutes.

It goes on—and these are the important words:

But that an additional ten minutes following each speech should be made available, if required, for questions or comments to the member who has just spoken.

Not a speech, not a speech by the Member, not even an answer to the question or a speech by the questioner, but a comment. You use the words yourself when you ask whether there are any comments by Hon. Members. The paragraph goes on as follows: