

# PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

## REPORT #5

### SO 73 — TIME LIMITS ON SPEECHES

#### 1. Order of Reference

On August 21 2002, the House referred the following proposed amendments to SO 73 to this Committee for consideration and report —

SO 73 is amended by —

- (a) repealing paragraphs (a) and (b) and substituting the following —

“

- (1) In the House, a member may speak —
  - (i) to a question, including an amended question if the member has not spoken to the original question, for not more than 45 minutes;
  - (ii) to the question for adjournment of the House under SO 61 for not more than 10 minutes.
- (2) A member who has spoken to the original question may speak again to a proposed amendment for not more than 30 minutes.
- (3) A member may speak in reply for not more than 45 minutes.
- (4) In a committee of the whole House a member may speak to a question any number of times for not more than 10 minutes on each call.

”

- (b) redesignating paragraph (c) as subclause (5);

- (c) by adding the following subclause —

“

- (6) At the expiration of the time stated for each of the following debates the question is to be put and determined —

Question	Max time
Adjournment under SO 61	40 mins
Special adjournment under SO 61(d)(ii)	20 mins
SO's suspension without notice – SO 433	60mins

”

As referred, the amendments would make the following changes to the existing arrangements —

1. maximum time for a speech is 45 minutes. The 60 minutes allocated for a speech on the address in reply, or on a money bill that cannot be amended by the Council, is abolished;
2. unlimited time allowed to the members described in SO 73(b)(i) is abolished. They are made subject to the limits that apply to any other member;
3. members speaking to an amendment, having already spoken to the original question, are limited to 30 minutes;
4. right of reply (where permitted) is limited to 45 minutes;
5. the 15 minute extension granted by leave is retained;
6. all members may speak for 10 minutes on each call in a committee of the whole;
7. in addition to the current 40 minutes allowed on a motion for the adjournment, a maximum of 20 minutes would apply to any debate on a special adjournment motion, and 60 minutes on a motion **without notice** to suspend standing orders.

Given the all-party representation of the Committee's members, it was to be expected that there would be differences of opinion on the desirability of adopting the proposal or certain aspects. The abolition of unlimited speaking times, particularly for the Leader of the Opposition, is a significant departure from the practice that has existed since time limits were first introduced in 1985.

The Opposition made a counter-proposal to the proposed total abolition of the Leader of the Opposition's unlimited time on all debates in the following terms —

- (3A) Where the original question is for the second reading of a bill, the limit imposed under subclause (1)(i) does not apply to the minister or member in charge of the bill, the Leader of the Opposition, or that member of the Opposition designated by the Leader of the Opposition as the lead speaker on that bill.

Under the counter-proposal, times limits would not apply to a speech given in the course of a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading debate to the minister or member in charge of the bill, the Leader of the Opposition or the Opposition's designated lead speaker. However, if both the Leader of the Opposition **and** the lead speaker take part in the debate, the unlimited time would be allocated in the absence of contrary advice, to the Leader of the Opposition by courtesy.

A further amendment that the Committee accepted extends from 60 minutes to 120 minutes the maximum time for a debate on a motion to suspend standing orders. To ensure that there is an opportunity for the views of each of the parties in the House to be given within that time, a consequential amendment has been made to subclause (1) by adding a new paragraph (iii).

The Committee **recommends** that SO 73 be amended as follows —

[text of Committee's amendments underlined]

“

SO 73 is amended by —

(a) repealing paragraphs (a) and (b) and substituting the following —

“

(1) In the House, a member may speak —

(i) to a question, including an amended question if the member has not spoken to the original question, for not more than 45 minutes;

(ii) to the question for adjournment of the House under SO 61 for not more than 10 minutes;

(iii) to the question for a suspension of standing orders on a motion without notice under SO 433 for not more than 20 minutes.

(2) A member who has spoken to the original question may speak again to a proposed amendment for not more than 30 minutes.

(3) A member may speak in reply for not more than 45 minutes.

(3A) Where the original question is for the second reading of a bill, the limit imposed under subclause (1)(i) does not apply to the minister or member in charge of the bill, the Leader of the Opposition, or that member of the Opposition designated by the Leader of the Opposition as the lead speaker on that bill.

(4) In a committee of the whole House a member may speak to a question any number of times for not more than 10 minutes on each call.

”

(b) redesignating paragraph (c) as subclause (5);

(c) by adding the following subclause —

“

(6) At the expiration of the time stated for each of the following debates the question is to be put and determined —

Question	Max time
Adjournment under SO 61	40 mins
Special adjournment under SO 61(d)(ii)	20 mins
SO's suspension without notice – SO 433	<u>120mins</u>

”

*George Cash*  
26/9/2002