

B.C. Telephone Dispute

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, it is the Minister of Transport who answers in the House for the Canadian Wheat Board and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who answers questions on the pipeline.

[English]

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, there was also my last question, with respect to the question raised by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell). The proper minister to answer was the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, but his question was answered by the Minister of Transport. Can we rely on this list and expect answers from the designated ministers rather than from some other minister?

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, it can happen, in view of our desire to provide complete answers, that we allow a minister whose department may be more concerned by a particular question to answer. So I think we have to be sufficiently flexible on both sides to understand that sometimes another minister than the one to whom the question was addressed is better qualified to answer a particular question, namely on the Canadian Wheat Board or the pipeline. It was because he could provide a more complete answer, and because there was a link with transport with regard to this particular question that the Minister of Transport answered. Now, if the hon. member would rather have his questions answered by the minister to whom they are addressed he may on occasion get answers that are not as exhaustive, and I do not think that is what the hon. member wants.

[English]

MR. ROBINSON (BURNABY)—BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR PARLIAMENTARY EMPLOYEES

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I have given the Chair notice of a point of order arising from the question which I attempted to ask today during question period. I am concerned that perhaps my intent in asking this question was not clearly stated. My question concerned the matter of legislative policy. It concerned possible changes to federal government legislation in the area of collective bargaining rights for employees of the House of Commons, the Senate and the Library of Parliament.

I recognize your jurisdiction over the administration of the employees of the House of Commons, Madam Speaker but, with respect, this is a separate question. As long ago as 1967 there was a recommendation that collective bargaining rights be extended to employees of the House of Commons. With great respect, only the government and not yourself, can introduce legislation granting collective bargaining rights to employees of the House of Commons, which would give them some form of grievance procedure.

● (1510)

Madam Speaker: If I may interrupt the hon. member, I agree totally with what he is saying, if he is asking a question about the legislative policy of the government. But as his question was formulated, it seems to me that it spills over into the responsibilities of the Speaker and confuses the responsibilities of the staff of Members of Parliament with the staff on the Hill. That is why I ruled the question could not be brought up in that form. If the hon. member wishes to bring the question up again in the form in which he has indicated it would be acceptable, although I cannot say so in advance.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I would ask again, with respect, that you examine carefully the question which I asked. In fact, I specifically referred to the government legislation. I pointed out the undertaking of the then government House leader, now the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), that he would introduce legislation to this effect. I pointed out that there were serious concerns over the fact that there is no protection for employees on the Hill, including employees of Members of Parliament. That was the question, and I have it here. I regret that perhaps there was a misunderstanding as to the intent of the question. However, certainly this kind of legislation is long overdue. That was my purpose in addressing the question to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) as representing the Liberal government, which has not kept its promise to bring in this legislation.

Madam Speaker: I would not want to be unfair to the hon. member, but I jumped to my feet because I heard something to the effect that this question was spilling over into the Speaker's jurisdiction and, therefore, the matter should be discussed directly with me, not in the House. If I have been unfair to the hon. member, I apologize. I will recognize him another time in this respect.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Madam Speaker, my point arises out of the matter raised by the hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson). In the preamble to his question he referred to members of staff having to suffer sexual harassment. If the hon. member has any evidence to back up his allegations, then I believe he should name names and not smear every member of this House with that kind of accusation.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

LABOUR RELATIONS

B.C. TELEPHONE COMPANY—APPOINTMENT OF MEDIATOR

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, I wonder whether the Minister of Labour (Mr. Regan) has a