

AGRICULTURE

DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF AID TO COW-CALF OPERATORS

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Agriculture. Last Friday, speaking to the Fort St. John and district chamber of commerce in British Columbia, the minister went to great lengths in praising the provisions of the agricultural stabilization legislation. He was so bold as to suggest, and I quote, that:

Farmers will not be left out in the cold when rapidly rising costs push the cost of production past returns.

I am sure the minister realizes that the cow-calf producers of this country are not only left out in the cold but are being practically frozen out of existence. Can the minister tell the House and the cow-calf operators of Canada when a program will be implemented and announced in this House for the aid of this important industry which, at present, is severely distressed? I ask this as many cow-calf operators are presently selling their animals for distress prices. The fall rush will soon be on us. I ask the minister to acknowledge the admonition of his own department, which indicates that there will be a cattle shortage in the near future, a shortage which may have the effect of raising consumer prices.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I should tell the hon. member that I met representatives of the cow-calf producers in the Peace River area, both from Alberta and from British Columbia. They attended the breakfast meeting in Fort St. John. They expressed deep concern. They told me they had better forage, better supplies and better grain crops than they had ever had in that area. The crops are all harvested but the producers are deeply concerned. They have made submissions and will make further submissions to provincial ministers. Some of them will be presented this week in Ottawa.

Mr. Mazankowski: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister, once again, has evaded my question. I was not asking for a detailed explanation as to what he was doing. Nor did I ask him for a bunch of rhetorical fluff. I ask him, as the producers of Canada ask him, either to put up or shut up.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should know that the producers of Canada, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Saskatchewan stock producers are asking that practically nothing be done and that some provinces have programs of their own. So, I am listening to what the producers of Canada are saying.

Privilege—Mr. O'Connell

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. O'CONNELL—PRESS PUBLICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION POLICY

Hon. Martin O'Connell (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, October 20, and Tuesday, October 21, the newspapers *Le Devoir* and the *Globe and Mail*, respectively, published, without authorization, excerpts from the confidential draft of a report of the Special Joint Committee of Parliament on Immigration Policy. This preliminary draft, and each and every page of it, is clearly stamped "Confidential until presented in the House" and is the result of proceedings conducted with closed doors. The unauthorized publication of documents such as this, prepared in this manner, is expressly prohibited by the rules of this House and constitutes a breach of the privileges of the House, in support of which I cite Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, fourth edition, chapter IX, section (5) of citation 320, page 250. I quote section (5):

● (1500)

No act done at any committee should be divulged before the same be reported to the House. Upon this principle the Commons, on April 21, 1837, resolved "That the evidence taken by any select committee of this House, and the documents presented to such committee and which have not been reported to the House, ought not to be published by any member of such committee or by any other person." Where the public is admitted this rule is usually not enforced. The publication of proceedings of committees conducted with closed doors or of reports of committees before they are available to members will, however, constitute a breach of privilege.

A special committee of parliament has been mandated to consider and report upon this sensitive and complex area of public policy. The unauthorized publication of this preliminary and confidential draft, which does not reflect the final conclusions of the committee and in fact has not yet been discussed as such by the committee, reduces the ability of this special committee of parliament to deal effectively with its mandate and can only be misleading to the public.

The circumstances of the unauthorized publications seem to be within the four corners of the breach of privilege as described in the citation I have given Your Honour. It is for this reason that I move, seconded by the hon. member for Kent-Essex (Mr. Daudlin):

That the unauthorized publication of the confidential draft of a report of the Special Joint Committee of Parliament on Immigration Policy be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words in support of the motion moved by the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. O'Connell), one of the chairmen of the special joint committee. The publication of this report as the view of the committee was false and misleading. As the hon. member made clear, there are many points which we have not discussed. There are many points which we have discussed and not yet agreed on. I and other members of the committee disagree with some of the points mentioned in the report.