

Committee Reports

Premier or not, but if he was talking about any of my Ministers I can deny it categorically.

DETAILS OF OFFER MADE TO NEWFOUNDLAND

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, so the Prime Minister will understand the question, the statement was that the federal negotiators, including the present Minister of Energy, solemnly told the Government of Newfoundland that the federal-Nova Scotia offshore agreement that was published and signed in March, 1982, was the entire agreement and that there was no more to it than that. However, it turned out several weeks ago, when the documents were tabled in this House, there was a secret side agreement dealing with the phasing out of tax equalization.

Did the Prime Minister instruct, or did the Government instruct these Ministers to keep this matter secret and to misinform—I will not use the word “lie”—or deceive the Newfoundland Government? This is a most important matter about which the Government of Newfoundland indicates that it was not told. It was told that the entire agreement was already publicly revealed, when it was not. If that is the case, could the Prime Minister tell us how there could be any agreement between those two Governments when the Prime Minister's negotiators have completely destroyed any good faith that might have existed, by using such tactics?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I had understood the question. I wish the Hon. Member had understood my answer. I already answered the question which he has just repeated.

Mr. Crosbie: Will he check it out?

Mr. Trudeau: I do not have to check it out, Mr. Speaker. I do know that anything offered to Nova Scotia by way of a written agreement or by way of a side agreement on equalization was also offered to Newfoundland.

Mr. Crosbie: That is not true.

Mr. Trudeau: If the Hon. Member has been told something to the contrary, he has been told a falsehood.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister agree to a public inquiry in order to establish the facts? They don't like the truth on that side.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

FOURTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: The fourth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture was presented to the House yesterday. In its report, the committee recommends that the Government give

consideration to the advisability of introducing a new royal recommendation at the report stage of Bill C-33, an Act to amend the Western Grain Stabilization Act, and that the Government consider the comments made in committee relating to proposed amendments. The question is whether it is within the competence of a standing committee to make such a recommendation when its order of reference is a Bill.

The governing authority is Citation 621(2) of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, which reads as follows:

A committee is bound by, and is not at liberty to depart from, the Order of Reference. Bourinot, p. 469. In the case of a committee upon a bill, the bill committed to it is itself the Order of Reference to the committee, which must report it with or without amendment to the House.

In the view of the Chair, there is no room for doubt or question about this citation, and it has been reinforced on numerous occasions.

I would also refer the House to a ruling made by my predecessor, Madam Speaker Sauvé, who ruled on a similar procedural difficulty on June 29, 1983, as follows:

I want to remind Members of all committees considering Bills referred to them by the House of Citation 783 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition:

“There is no authority that a committee of the House, when considering a bill, should report anything to the House except the bill itself”.

The Agriculture Committee did just that in its Fifth Report presented yesterday. There are other procedural avenues for the consideration of such substantive proposals, but this cannot be done by way of a report from any committee studying a Bill. Therefore, I have no alternative but to declare the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture out of order and consequently it cannot be received.

* * *

PETITIONS

TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions presented by Hon. Members on Tuesday, June 12, 1984, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—PRESENTATION OF FOURTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Fifth Report of the committee to which, pursuant to Standing