

Routine Proceedings

was privy to an *in camera* decision this morning and I could only do so afterward.

Had I been able without breaking my oath of secrecy, I would have risen on this point of order before the tabling of the documents in question, and I would have prevented them or submitted to the Chair that the documents should not have been tabled. Because that would have been a breach of the secrecy by which I was bound until the documents were tabled, obviously I could not do so.

I make the case to the Speaker now that what has happened over the last few minutes in this House is not proper and is not in accordance with the rules.

Some members across the way do not like the submission I am making to the Chair. It is not a matter of liking or disliking. It is a matter of following the rules that we have set forth for ourselves. If we decide collectively in the future that we want to change those rules, that we want to abandon having Part IIIs of the Estimates, I would resist that, but if the House decides that in its collective wisdom I will have to live with the decision that was made. Until such time as this House changes the rules, the government has to obey the rules that were made.

Mr. Speaker, you are the custodian of our rights in this House. I make the submission to you, that the government has failed to observe the rules that we have made. An hon. member across the way asks what I want. It is not a matter of what I want, it is a matter of what is right and what has to be done in accordance with the rules that we have set for ourselves.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the point of order very briefly. My hon. colleague has made a very articulate presentation with regard to the decisions that this House has taken, and the fact that the document tabled just a few moments ago did not conform to that.

I would ask that Your Honour review the particular instances cited by the member, and at some point report back to the House as to whether or not the government, in fact, has violated the rules of the House and issue whatever appropriate instructions you may find to the government to ensure that if indeed it has broken the rules of the House by not tabling all of Part III, there be some process put into place to ensure that next year the government not be allowed to get away with only tabling part of the Estimates.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I would like to intervene for a couple of moments on this point of order. It is my belief that the government has in fact fulfilled the rules of the House. What the rules of the House require in the tabling of the Estimates is that Part IIs be tabled which we have of course complied with.

I also wish to inform the House that it is not our intention not to proceed with the Part IIIs. They will be printed at a later date and will be in the hands of the members on or before March 12.

We believe that we have been consistent with the rules in tabling what we have tabled today and do not think that in any way have we violated the process.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to consider the point raised by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and joined in by the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan. I will also, of course, take into account the comments of the parliamentary secretary. I shall return to the House at an appropriate time and remark on the issue that has been raised.

At the moment, I do not think that I have any authority to stop the government from tabling those parts which they are doing. As a consequence, whatever the rights or wrongs of this point may be, can be settled later. We do have to proceed with the tabling as it is. As I say, I will come back to the House with my comments at an appropriate time.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to prolong this, although I would be inclined to because I just had the same frustrating experience as my colleague from the Liberal side. I think I heard the parliamentary secretary indicate that the departmental Estimates will be available by March 12. The rules specifically say that they should be available by March 1.

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt an hon. member rising on an important matter but the point of order has been made. I have indicated that I will give it very careful consideration and report back to the House. If the hon. member has another point of order, of course I will hear him. Is it another matter?

Mr. McCurdy: I want to point out that the parliamentary secretary stood in his place and indicated that the departmental Estimates would be available by March 12. I just want to indicate to the Speaker that under Standing Order 81(4), the rules require that those be available by March 1, not March 12. If the parliamentary