

*Designation of Ministers*

advance of seeking or receiving approval from the House of Commons.

I want to ask the government House leader a question concerning a matter which I raised last week and on which the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader indicated a willingness to seek an answer. It concerns the practice which has grown up in the country of the government taxing people in advance of seeking and obtaining approval from the House of Commons. I have asked both by way of a verbal question and a written question—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. We are in a position where I recognized a certain number of hon. members to ask questions concerning government business, and of course it led into the question which was discussed by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and others. It seems to me that we must be very careful not to enter into debate on this question. The hon. minister offered to procure some information which he will transmit to those members who have been seeking clarification. I think we should leave it at that for the time being. I recognized the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain for the purpose of discussing government business. If he has any questions on government business, I will give him the floor.

**Mr. Deans:** Madam Speaker, as I was about to say, since the government House leader indicated that the ways and means motion with regard to the Income Tax Act is not about to be called, although it sits on the Order Paper, since it is apparent that there is not yet any legislation which has gone through government channels with regard to the Income Tax Act changes suggested in the budget, and since there is no legislative approval for the taxes which are already in place, when can we expect to see legislation dealing with the specific changes that are currently being enacted illegally by employers from coast to coast as a result of the direction given by the government?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, according to my hon. colleague's last comments, he wants to discuss in Parliament a case that should be discussed before the courts. Continuing the debate, he wants to know whether we have the legal right to collect in advance the taxes proposed by a budget. That is a very interesting legal point, and I should be most interested to discuss it with him. We could even consider going to court together on this case, but I think the hon. member has many times before tried to raise this subject as a matter of privilege, as a point of order and as a question on the business of the House. I agree it is a very interesting point, but I do not think it is up to this parliamentary institution to determine the legality of the procedure. To get back to the question raised by the member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker)—like the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) and his leader, he too seems to be in a state of limbo. Let me reassure my hon. colleagues. I told them I would consider their comments on the government's reorganization, and that if I were able to provide any further clarification, I would do so very shortly, possibly today

or tomorrow or within the next few days. Meanwhile, I can inform the members of the opposition that there is absolutely nothing illegal about the procedure in question. I advise them to read very carefully the Government Organization Act, 1970, and they will realize that the ministries of State to which they referred are perfectly legal. Meanwhile, while I am trying to understand exactly what it is the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) wants to know and what is upsetting him, I should like to repeat that there is absolutely nothing illegal about this procedure. The Leader of the Opposition could perhaps take this opportunity to read and understand the Government Organization Act, 1970, and ask for clarification if necessary.

[English]

**Mr. Deans:** Madam Speaker, I have one final question. Since the government House leader is so able to inform the Leader of the Opposition that there is nothing illegal with regard to the appointment of new ministers and their new responsibilities, why can he not give the same assurances with respect to the imposition of taxes?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague wants to know my personal opinion. He himself referred earlier to parliamentary practice. It is obvious that in this case, the legality of the measure would be based on parliamentary practice and not on legislation, since there is none.

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[English]

#### PRIVILEGE

MR. PARKER—HYDRO RATES FOR RESIDENTS OF FIELD, B.C.

**Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I have given notice relating to today's proceedings on the matter of the unacceptably high hydro rates faced by Field residents. In a letter addressed to me on October 26, 1981, the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts) indicated that Parks Canada was preparing to negotiate with the Northern Canada Power Commission a hydro rate reduction for residents of Field, British Columbia, who now face the threat of having their hydro service cut off.

My question of privilege concerns the fact that when a minister makes a written commitment I expect him to carry it out. I should like to supply Madam Speaker with the information, and if you find that I have a question of privilege, I would like it brought before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Madam Speaker:** I do not think that will be necessary because the question raised by the hon. member does not constitute a matter of privilege. It is perhaps a grievance which the hon. member might have against the minister's actions, but it is certainly not a question of privilege.