

No. 195

JOURNALS

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OF CANADA

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1973

2.00 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS

A question of privilege having been raised by the honourable Member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) relating to the giving of evidence in the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works;

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: I do not want to prevent the Minister from answering the statement made by the honourable Member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), but the honourable Member gave me notice of his intention to raise this matter by way of a question of privilege and I am now prepared to make a ruling. Perhaps it might be preferable to do it this way rather than revive the difficulties which are apparently taking place in the committee.

The honourable Member for Peace River is, of course, referring to a very important principle relating to evidence which is given in committee or any other circumstance. Whether the grievance which the honourable Member for Peace River or other honourable Members may have in this respect should be considered by the House by way of a question of privilege is another matter.

I think it is a long established principle, perhaps as important as the one which has been quoted by the honourable Member for Peace River, that such procedural

difficulties which come up in committee, to the extent they are procedural difficulties, ought to be settled there rather than in the House. I am sure the honourable Member realized this and appreciates the difficulty procedurally to which his point has given rise. That is why, rather than suggest that a proceeding which is taking place in the committee be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, he submitted for the consideration of the House what is effectively a substantive proposal. If the honourable Member has a substantive proposal, it becomes an ordinary motion which requires 48 hours notice. He cannot take it up again then by way of a question of privilege.

I certainly do not want to minimize in any way the importance of the matter raised by the honourable Member for Peace River, but I suggest to him that it is not possible for the Chair to find there is a *prima facie* case of privilege which would make it possible for the House to consider a substantive motion at this time. That is certainly not in accordance with long established traditions of the House relative to matters of privilege. Therefore, I must find against the honourable Member in respect of the very limited procedural question which is before me, namely whether there is or is not a *prima facie* case of privilege. The ruling of the Chair must be in the negative.