

Supply—Defence Production

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: I shall try to rule on the point of order submitted to the Chair. There was no question of privilege; it was merely a contribution to a debate. I think everyone is taking part in a debate. There are no points of order.

Mr. Hopkins: Nor questions of privilege.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): I am speaking on a question of privilege right now.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: There can only be one question of privilege before us at one time and I wish the hon. member would not make the task of the Chair more difficult. I have been looking at the clock for the last 15 minutes hoping it will be six o'clock.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Am I to understand the Chair is now ruling that questions of privilege can be brought up at any time and need not be raised at the earliest opportunity?

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The question is hypothetical. The Chair ruled there were no valid points of order raised on either side of the house.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): There was a question of privilege before you, if not a point of order.

Mr. Hopkins: I should like to clarify this point. The hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek knows that I rose on a question of privilege a couple of minutes ago specifically because he implied I was not in the house last night. The question of privilege I raised followed the comment he made not five minutes ago. It was not something which arose 24 hours ago as the hon. member for Cape Breton South has suggested. I rose this afternoon to deliver a speech, and that speech is obviously not a question of privilege. I am speaking on behalf of my riding. The question of privilege related to something which occurred immediately before I rose and has no connection with anything which happened last night.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Why were you quoting from *Hansard*?

Mr. McIntosh: It is quite correct that the hon. member for Renfrew North spoke on a question of privilege arising from a statement I made that he was not in the house last night. I apologize for making that statement; I did not know he was in the house. But I

will make another suggestion right now. His speech today was intended for consumption in his own area, looking toward the next election. He says he does not want to see discrimination. When I asked him a question he said: Let the minister answer it. If he is in favour of equal rights for all he should be supporting the idea I am putting forward. If he did not support ministers who make deals in this way we would have less trouble in Canada than we are experiencing today.

Mr. Nasserden: I have one or two questions to ask the minister. Was an item in respect of prepaid expenses included in the financial statement of this organization and was there an amount reserved for bad debts?

Mr. Drury: I mentioned that there was no reserve for bad debts in the balance sheet of September 29, but there is an item for prepaid expenses in the amount of some \$9,000.

Mr. Peters: Was this previously a crown corporation? If so, for how long had it been a crown corporation?

Mr. Drury: I am sorry the hon. member did not hear my outline. This is a plant built and owned by the crown but operated by a number of private operators.

Mr. Peters: I am prompted to rise by the remarks of the hon. member for Renfrew North who told the committee he was happy the minister had been able to solve this problem by the sale of the Renfrew plant. There has been some suggestion that the Polymer Corporation should be sold but if that happened I presume the transaction would be handled in a totally different way, possibly through the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation, a course which would, I imagine, result in a great deal of extra prestige for that corporation.

The hon. member pointed out that the maintenance and operation of this plant were a matter of great importance to more than 200 workers and said he was pleased about the decision which had been reached. However, it seems to me we should be given a much clearer understanding of the means by which crown corporations are disposed of. Several weeks ago another crown corporation, Northern Ontario Pipe Line Crown Corporation, was wound up. It had been set up by parliament for a specific purpose and when that purpose had been achieved it was disposed of by an act of parliament. The machinery used to close that corporation down was the same