

Area Program Summaries

Then rose in the House another procedure specialist, the then President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen), who stated the position of the government on this subject. He said, and I quote:

My approach and the approach of the government is exactly the approach of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. Our objective is to make as much information available as possible. We believe that Members of Parliament require factual information about the operations of the government in order that they may carry out their parliamentary duties. That statement is included in the general principle. We are also aware that the desire to make available as much information as possible must be balanced against effective public administration, protection of the security of the state and rights to privacy. It is always a delicate matter of judgment to balance the desire to make information available with the effective administration of the government, security of the state and other considerations.

Mr. MacEachen then went on to explain the reason for this general principle—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) on a question of privilege.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): I got the impression, while listening to the hon. member who now has the floor, that he is questioning my motives to pursue this question. I protest energetically against this insinuation regarding my motives which are as parliamentary as can be. We are entitled, Madam Speaker, to have a look at documents which report on the activities of CIDA abroad.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. The hon. member is certainly aware that the question of privilege can only be brought up when the rights of the hon. member are affected. Now, I doubt very much that the rights of the hon. member are limited. It is rather a question of debate.

Mr. Lachance: In spite of everything, I did not want to antagonize the hon. member across the way; I wished to reassure him. I have no intention of discussing his personal motives. I am merely trying to explain the position of the government, which has been the same for many a year. I shall therefore pursue my argument.

As I was saying, the principle has a historical background in that Mr. Disraeli, the renowned British Prime Minister, first explained it. In addition, many authors have explained it in writing. Others took the opposite tack, but that is democracy.

Having said this, I see I have very little time left. Let us say simply that my friend and colleague from Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe) dealt with it much more ably than I did, saying that the interim reports requested have precisely this advisory and non mandatory character and on this sole basis the government seems justified in firmly dismissing the demands of the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro). In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I would be remiss in failing to point out that the whole problem of the minister's responsibility towards CIDA and the power of evocation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs has been discussed at length and I feel the matter was settled once and for all. The bitter controversy which arose from that debate became the stock argument of the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) and of his party.

[Mr. Lachance.]

In spite of the claims of some members, particularly in the light of the remarks made by my colleague, the hon. member for Charlevoix, I think that this House has enough information to pass judgment on the performance of CIDA, without prejudice to the necessity of throwing some light on the matter and of requiring the responsible minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), to report to the House on the activities of CIDA.

[English]

Mr. Roche: Madam Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING DEFINITIONS, POWERS OF INVESTIGATORS, OFFENCES

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-2, to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Bank Act and to repeal an act to amend an act to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Criminal Code, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The House having considered all motions except Nos. 6 and 24, it appears appropriate now to give those two motions consideration. It was agreed that those two motions would be deferred until all other motions had been considered. That point having been reached, presumably it would be more orderly to deal first with motion No. 6, and then with No. 24. However, I am in the hands of the House.

An hon. Member: Take motion No. 6 first.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: First we will consider motion No. 6. I had previously expressed my reservations about motion No. 6, but the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) who moved the motion has not appeared in the House this evening.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, may I speak to that matter? The reason for this amendment was the sense of frustration felt by all members of the committee, myself included, who felt that, in some ways, they had been dealt with cavalierly by the minister on this impor-