

tions and, if we ask them, the government cannot answer them or ought not to answer them, especially in the circumstances raised by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). This matter has to be looked at seriously.

If Your Honour finds there is a prima facie case with respect to the matter raised today by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, I would like to move, seconded by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham:

That the matter raised in the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The matter is now before Your Honour, and I think it is time the House of Commons and Your Honour dealt with it appropriately.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member is attempting to set the matter in that context. He will recognize at once that the particular form of words he is endeavouring to use in this motion have been ruled out of order on numerous occasions in the past, namely, that the matter referred to, or described by an hon. member, be referred to a standing committee. As I have attempted to say to the House on several occasions earlier this afternoon, the difficulty is that that is not a specific definition upon which a committee can act. I understand what the hon. member is attempting to do.

I do not think we ought to fear that the matter cannot be continued. Every participant in this discussion today has sought the opportunity to address the House with more detailed argument at a later date after examining the transcript. That has arisen on both sides of the House. That was put forth by the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), as well as by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) made remarks indicating that we ought to check the transcript. There seems to be a great difference of opinion as to what the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) said today, and that ought to be clarified. If, after an examination of the transcript, and after consideration of it, there is a considered motion which hon. members want to put before the House for argument at a later time, then I surely give to the House the right to carry that forward at a later date. Any motion ought to be carefully considered after examination of the transcript. I leave it open for the House to do that at a later time.

[English]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

POINT OF ORDER

MR. BAKER (GRENVILLE-CARLETON)—MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE

Mr. Speaker: Statements by ministers.

Northern Pipeline Act

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to this matter on the order paper, statements by ministers. I understand the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) has scheduled a press conference for later today with respect to the pipeline legislation which appears on the order paper and which he intends to introduce and be given first reading today.

I would not want to put the minister in a position where we would engage in a protracted question period with respect to a statement by him, which a section of the rules would allow, because I do not want to delay him in any way. Given that undertaking, I wonder whether the minister might be prepared to make a general statement in the House now, prior to meeting with the press, in order to set before the House of Commons on the first possible occasion the things he will tell the press outside about a bill which will be introduced a little later today. I do that in the hope that my hon. friend would see the propriety of telling us, in a statement in the House under the conditions I have set forth, what he intends to say outside the House after he has introduced the bill.

● (1252)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): May I say, in reply to the question, that it was not my intention to make a statement. The bill will be given first reading and it will be available to all members of the House. When that occurs, I intend to meet the press and tell them what will be known to everybody at that time, namely, what is in the bill.

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NORTHERN PIPELINE ACT

ESTABLISHMENT OF AGENCY TO SUPERVISE PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-25, to establish the Northern Pipeline Agency, to facilitate the planning and construction of a pipeline for the transmission of natural gas from Alaska and Northern Canada and to give effect to an agreement between Canada and the United States of America on principles applicable to such a pipeline and to amend certain acts in relation thereto.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the bill be read the second time? At the sitting of the House?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.