

Proposal for Time Allocation

in camera meetings, which were conducted in an informal way, to have one party come along with practically all of the ideas advanced by various members and lay claim to them.

Mr. Douglas: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member is suggesting that the proposals which I enumerated were purloined from the committee and that somebody on the committee representing our party transmitted confidential information, then I want to say that such a suggestion is completely inaccurate and fallacious. As a matter of fact, the eight points that I enumerated today I outlined at a press conference two and a half years ago, and they were advocated by our representative on the committee. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, they could hardly have been purloined from the committee because we took them to the committee. Members of other parties may also have taken them to the committee, but I resent any suggestion that there has been some breach of confidence on the part of our representative on the committee.

Mr. Olson: After having the leader of the New Democratic party remind us that he did in fact present most of these points some two and a half years ago, Mr. Speaker, an even more serious question of privilege arises so far as I am concerned. If my memory serves me correctly, these eight points—I believe that in fact there were 11 put forward at the time—were contained in a press release which was issued between the time the subcommittee discussed them and the time the report was to be brought to the whole committee for further consideration. Therefore there is some kind of breach of propriety so far as I am concerned in the hon. member advancing these points now, and there was an even more serious breach of propriety at the time because almost all of them were in fact discussed by a subcommittee of the procedure committee. As I say, they were issued in a press release by the New Democratic party even before they had been discussed by the whole committee.

Mr. Brewin: And why not?

Mr. Olson: The hon. member asks why not. It seems that that is all the regard the hon. member has for the confidentiality of in-camera meetings. I respect the nature of such meetings. It is useful to hold informal meetings conducted on a basis of confidentiality

[Mr. Olson.]

and without press releases being issued, because I happen to believe that far more gets done in that way.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I am speaking now as a member of the New Democratic party caucus. I want to tell the hon. member that to my own knowledge the proposals which we put forward publicly through our leader two and a half years ago and which he has again presented today were hammered out in good faith by the members of this party meeting together. I point out that the ideas that were set forth were ideas that we individually and collectively put forward in our own caucus and about which we reached certain conclusions. As I understand it, that is the manner in which they were again put forward by my leader today. He put them forward as a proposal in good faith, with the honest hope that putting them forward in the context of this debate might improve the procedures of this house. I must say I am surprised that a member such as the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) should suggest that these proposals were put forward in any other context. As my leader has said, we certainly do not claim exclusive parenthood for any or all of the ideas contained therein.

In concluding my question of privilege, may I say that we regard these proposals as being worthy of serious consideration by the members of this house no matter in which part of the chamber they happen to sit. We only hope that the hon. member for Medicine Hat and other members will consider them worthy of support.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I did not want to interrupt the question of privilege but I would remind the hon. member for Comox-Alberni that his remarks were out of order because he is not in his own seat.

Mr. Barnett: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I am in my own seat.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni I should like to make one or two comments, perhaps in a rather obtuse way. I realize that the hon. member for Medicine Hat has the floor, but since the question of privilege has been raised, and in view of some of the things said by the hon. member about honesty, I should like to make a few comments.