

Privilege—Mr. Domm

An Hon. Member: What deals are cooked up there?

Mr. Kempling: My colleague asked what deals are cooked up. I think that is a very unfair comment.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As I indicated to Hon. Members, there seems to be a grievance here, and feelings are fairly tense. However, I would ask all Hon. Members not to impute motives to other Hon. Members, and that applies to all of us.

Mr. Kempling: I might also say we are not asked by the regulations laid down in the establishment of the new Private Members' Rules and Regulations that we disclose why we accept a motion or a Bill, or why we do not. We are not required to do that, so we have not done so.

We believe, Sir, that the Committee on Justice and Solicitor General has the power in itself to undertake the study on its own. Why did we come to this decision? We draw 20 Bills and we can only select up to six Bills.

Mr. Vankoughnet: Only five are selected.

Mr. Kempling: If the Hon. Member wishes to speak on this matter, I wish he would do so later.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for Burlington.

Mr. Kempling: We pick up to six bills or motions—

Mr. Vankoughnet: Five.

Mr. Kempling:—which are drawn from the hopper. I should say the last time we went through this procedure we picked three because there will be a further draw after we dispose of 10 items. What would be the point of pulling another 10 items if the Hon. Members felt there was no possibility of that item coming before the House of Commons for a vote? Therefore, we chose them on that basis. We selected three the first time. We selected five when we disposed of 10 of the motions or bills we have before us. We will select another 10, and one of those may possibly go on for a vote.

I want you to understand as well, Mr. Speaker, that we are breaking new ground. The first batch of bills we had before us in the first session were basically bills and motions some of which had been in the hopper for years. Some of them were flawed procedurally, some were flawed legally and some were flawed constitutionally. But those bills were put into the hopper for the first draw. Most of the bills have been re-deposited. Some of them have just been changed from bills to motions. It is a learning process for Hon. Members. I believe that as we go down the road we will eventually begin to produce better motions and better bills. At the disposal of the committee is the advice of legal and drafting experts. We urge Hon. Members to seek out the advice of these experts to ensure that when their Bills come before us they are in the best possible form.

● (1600)

As far as the committee is concerned, and my colleague the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) may wish to comment on this point, if the matter is referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure, we would be pleased to hear it. We would also be pleased to hear the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) when the committee next meets, if he wishes to appear before us.

I cannot comment on the leak to the press. That is a separate issue. I was as shocked as all Hon. Members when I picked up *The Ottawa Citizen* on the morning the committee reported to the House to find comments regarding the report. At the final meeting of the committee the members of the committee authorized me to speak on their behalf to the media after the report was tabled. I did this. I spoke to a number of journalists outside the Chamber with respect to this issue. I might add that it is the only issue about which they were really concerned.

I leave the matter in your hands, Mr. Speaker. Numerous rulings have been made in the past about the business of committee members and whether or not Speakers should intervene. I will not read those rulings into the record, since I am sure Your Honour has them at your fingertips. I think this is a serious matter. It is a grievance. It should be referred to another committee which could perhaps give us more direction with respect to how we should proceed in the future.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak to the question of privilege raised by the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm). My remarks are not with respect to the merits of his motion, since obviously that is not my role at this time.

There are two issues before us to consider. The first is with respect to the media leak. I was fortunate enough to have had my item chosen. Like many others I learned of it on the radio of my automobile while driving home on Friday afternoon instead of learning about it through the regular means by which Members normally find out about such matters. I found that procedure to be somewhat unusual even though it was good news for me personally.

The second item I wish to bring to the attention of the Chair is the matter of a committee sitting *in camera*. Citation 628 of Beauchesne's defines *in camera* sittings of committees. As I understand it, and as has been explained to me privately by the Hon. Member for Peterborough, the *in camera* sittings with respect to this committee were somewhat different from those associated with other committees of the House. What I mean to say is that under the definition of *in camera* sittings in Beauchesne's a committee has the right to exclude strangers at any time. I do not know of an *in camera* sitting of a committee which excluded Members of the House from attending. The incidents described to me by the Hon. Member for Peterborough, although briefly, lead me to believe that Members were not permitted to attend this particular *in camera* sitting. I have a problem with the procedures of a committee which create a