

Oral Questions

58, a situation which in my view is not contemplated by subsection (5) of Standing Order 26.

In the circumstances, I am afraid I cannot agree with the contention of the hon. member for Peace River that an adjournment debate under the provisions of Standing Order 26 can be invoked to debate the application or the interpretation of another Standing Order.

Mr. Paproski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It concerns the question I asked the parliamentary secretary yesterday when he was reading the answers to the questions on the order paper. The parliamentary secretary was misleading the House when he stated it would cost the government \$1.5 million to answer Question No. 319 standing in my name on the order paper. If the parliamentary secretary has proof of this accounting, I would like him to present it to the House so that the rest of the members can have a look at it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It concerns a very dangerous practice that seems to be creeping into our proceedings. In the absence of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray) yesterday, a very important study which had been commissioned by the Canadian Consumer Council was released by the minister's office. The study deals with the consumer interest in regulatory boards and agencies. It has been in the minister's hands since June. We understand the minister has every right to have this document as long as it is necessary for him to understand it. We further understand it takes the minister a little longer than most to be able to absorb what is in these documents.

My point of order is that this document more properly should have been placed before the House under the provisions of Standing Order 41. I raise this point to get the guidance of Your Honour, because if parliament is sitting and if ministers are allowed to circumvent the rules in this way, I see no purpose in parliament being in session in the first instance. This very important document should be officially laid on the table of the House under Standing Order 41. I say the minister is in contempt of this House by circumventing the rules and releasing this study outside the House yesterday.

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure that the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) requires a ruling of the Chair. He has raised a point of order. There being no further debate, I wonder whether it would be helpful for the Chair to make a ruling.

This standing order clearly provides a way for ministers of the Crown to table documents. It was introduced several years ago in order to make it easier for members of the ministry to table documents without points of order and without debate. I am not sure the standing order can be interpreted as imposing an obligation on ministers to table documents in the House under Standing Order 41. That may be so, although I do not think I could interpret the standing order as it now stands in that way.

It may well be that the standing order was designed and devised to make it possible for ministers to table their documents, and to encourage them to table them in the

House rather than publish them outside the House. My impression is this general rule has been followed for some time. I have not observed, nor have I sought to observe or study, whether there has been a departure from that rule. I will perhaps look at the matter in this light. However, my ruling on the point of order raised by the hon. member will have to be that I cannot interpret the standing order as imposing an obligation on the minister to table the document or to publicize the document under the terms of Standing Order 41.

● (1420)

Mr. Stevens: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. Before I took my seat in the chamber I understand the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre proposed a motion of which, perhaps inadvertently, he suggested I was the seconder. Possibly he intended to mention the name of the hon. member for York South, not York-Simcoe, because I had never seen the motion before.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On that point of order—

Mr. Speaker: My understanding is that it was a question of privilege, not a point of order, though the hon. member did make a point which was more in the nature of a point of order than a question of privilege. Anyway, he is on the record now as divorcing himself from the motion proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I rise, then, on a point of order. I do not accept the accusation of having made a mistake. I deliberately named the hon. member for York-Simcoe because I took him at his word—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: That is where you made your mistake.

Mr. Stevens: Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre did not follow my words yesterday.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I certainly did. Read *Hansard*.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FINANCE

EFFECT OF INCREASE IN PRIME RATE BY BANK OF CANADA—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): A question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the move over the weekend by the Bank of Canada to increase the bank rate has been interpreted by managers of money as being a signal to tighten the screws on credit, and has already led to increases charged by the chartered banks and so on down the line, and since it is