

*Privilege—Mr. Gillies*

statement changing policy in some way. Therefore, it gives an indication of the difficulty in attempting to change a regulation which might be enforceable in a reasonably consistent way, because who is going to have the responsibility of defining what is or what is not a major policy statement by a minister, what is simply the tabling of the document and what ought or ought not to be accompanied by a statement?

In any case, that only represents some of the difficulties which give rise to the existence of the precedent and the clear practices of the House that the failure, the option of the minister to make a statement either in the House or outside it, may be the subject of comment and is, as was the comment made today, but is not the subject of a question of privilege for those reasons.

I think I ought to add that privilege is a classification of a motion which, if accepted by the Chair, is coming within the classic definition of privilege and takes precedence over other motions that would be before the House in the ordinary course of business. The fact that it does not qualify within the confines of privilege does not mean that it has no importance. There are some standard motions that can be put before the House on the same subject in other ways. The question that the Chair always has to decide when a question of privilege is raised is upon the practices and precedents of the House. Does this question come within the classic definition of privilege so as to supersede other business? On the precedents and their very clear application at numerous times in the past I have to find that that is not the case at the present time.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I prefaced my question this morning by saying that crude oil reserves in Canada have been declining in recent years. The minister said that if I had read the report which he tabled yesterday I would know that these reserves are the same. I know the minister would not want to mislead the House. I therefore refer to the document which he tabled, and at page 14 it reads:

Current remaining reserves of conventional crude are down some 17 per cent from the peak year of 1970.

I was not referring to frontier oil of which only half a billion barrels have been found; I was referring to conventional crude oil. It is perfectly apparent from the document the minister tabled that there has been a decline. None of us is happy about it. I do not think the minister would want to leave the impression that there has been no decline in our reserves of conventional crude oil.

**Mr. Gillespie:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the hon. member has clarified the preamble to his question, and as a clarification, of course, I accept his position. It was not the way I understood it when he put it to me. The impression he created for me, and I think for some others, was that there had in fact been a change from the previous year with respect to conventional crude oil reserves. That, of course, is not the fact: the document makes that clear.

[Mr. Speaker.]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the government House leader is in a position today to designate an allotted day next week, in view of discussions that have taken place since yesterday.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to designate Tuesday of next week as an allotted day.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. An interesting situation took place this morning over a motion moved by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre in relation to Bell Telephone. I raise it because of some interesting studies that have been done in Bell Telephone which have come to my attention. The question was raised in relation to the high salaries and the fact that this had relation to the subscribers. In our discussion of a Standing Order 43 motion Your Honour heard a "yes" and "no" vocal declaration. There is a certain amount of anonymity which I presume is protection by no designation. I would question whether Your Honour is in a position to know whether there is a conflict of interest in this regard. It has been brought to my attention that a number of members of the House are closely connected with Bell Telephone Company.

● (1220)

**Mr. Woolliams:** We are all connected!

**Mr. Peters:** I am not talking about subscribers of Bell Telephone. They are the ones paying the high salaries of the people concerned. But there are other members of the House who are much more closely connected with Bell Telephone Company.

**An hon. Member:** Name them.

**Mr. Peters:** I would be happy to name them. They are much more closely connected because of the control of companies which own Bell Telephone. If they had been the ones to say no, or if the whip of the party had said no, that would be one thing; but if it had been any other member there would have been a conflict of interest. My point is that by using the method whereby no one has to say they are in favour of, or opposed to the motion, they may be involved in a conflict of interest and this would not be readily apparent to Your Honour.

Therefore, I suggest that for the protection of members who do not want to be involved in conflict of interest—because I assume that any member who has an indirect control of Bell Telephone Company has said no—it would be much better if we adopted a procedure whereby those who objected to a motion would have to say no, so there would be no doubt about the matter.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Timiskaming has raised a point which has been raised before and to which the Chair has given attention in the past. It may be a suggestion for changes in the procedures in the House which can be made in