

*Question of Privilege*

all hon. members, but with the unanimous consent of the house I would be very happy to table these two copies herewith for the information of hon. members who may wish to refer to them.

I should also add that the report was commenced some two years ago as part of a planning program for our national parks to provide for the steadily increasing number of visitors, while still maintaining the essential functions of the parks as conservation areas.

**Mr. Speaker:** I presume, in that the point raised by the hon. member is now satisfied by the tabling of this report—

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, in so far as the actual incident is concerned I am very appreciative of the minister's offer, but the minister has given no indication in regard to the principle. It seems to me there is a principle—

**An hon. Member:** What principle?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It would be of considerable assistance if anyone who wishes to make a comment on what the hon. member is saying would make it while standing when he has the floor. The Chair cannot hear these interjections, and I would ask the indulgence of the house in this regard.

**Mr. Fisher:** I do not wish to make any great capital out of this situation but I would point out to you, sir, that the privileges of hon. members seem to be involved when a report is prepared on the order of a minister and it is revealed in public before even the minister sees it. I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, since the minister has given an explanation in regard to this, whether he has any statement to make on the principle relating to the presentation of the document in public before he or hon. members of this house have had any chance to see it.

**Mr. Fulton:** There is no privilege there.

**Mr. Speaker:** There are two questions involved here. First of all, this is not a report that is required by any standing order or statute; therefore before the minister can actually table such a report he requires the unanimous consent of the house.

Regarding the right of hon. members to insist on having such a report, there is the interposition of the unanimous consent of the house to have the report tabled and, as has been indicated to me, there is the further point that the document could have been ordered by a resolution of the house for the tabling of papers. Those are the only means whereby this particular report can come before the house, either by unanimous consent of the house or as a result of a resolution of the house.

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

Therefore I cannot see how the hon. member can insist that there is a question of privilege of the rights of hon. members, because hon. members have not got that right. The minister must ask for unanimous consent. There is a distinction here, and I shall now ask whether the house will give the minister unanimous consent for the tabling of this report.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** In so far as the question of privilege is concerned, I believe we shall leave it at that.

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, could I just ask you to consider this point and give us an opinion later on; that if a report prepared by the government, or for the government at the government's request, is available to the general public before it is available to hon. members of the house, then the privileges of the house may be reduced. I would like this particular point to be considered because, with respect to the two points you brought up, I think they relate to procedure rather than to the general question of the privileges of hon. members to see a government document.

**Mr. Speaker:** That may be so, on the question the hon. member has raised. I will not comment upon his general observations as to propriety. At the moment I can think of many serious difficulties which might arise and where it might be quite improper. On the other hand, the hon. member would not be entitled to have this report if hon. members in any part of this house had said, "No, we will not have this tabled". Then there would have to be a motion for the production of papers. I cannot see that any hon. member can have a right which is subject to the consent of the house.

[Later:]

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish to call the attention of hon. members to a ruling I made this morning, and to make a minor correction. A question of privilege having been submitted by the hon. member for Port Arthur, I indicated that before the minister, in this case, the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, could table a report he was presenting to the house he would require the unanimous consent of the house.

That went too far. All that is required is the consent of the house. I would not wish the record to appear as though the unanimous consent of the house were needed.