

Unemployment Insurance Act

the difficulty comes. It relates to the reference of certain estimates to a committee of the House. There is a long standing rule—I will read it from Beauchesne, citation 324—which states:

Until the report and evidence have been laid upon the Table, it is irregular to refer to them in debate, or to put questions in reference to the proceedings of the committee.

The Chair is also aware that to establish the timetable of events as to when facts became known, which is important to the argument of the minister, to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and to other hon. members who will be taking part in the debate, one cannot leave chronological blanks. So, when the minister made the first reference, and the hon. member for Peace River made the second reference to evidence in the committee, I did not raise this point of order then. But I think that at least I would be content at the moment, without giving a detailed ruling, if the evidence were used simply to provide the chronology of events leading up to the legislation we are now considering, rather than getting into a discussion of the evidence itself in the committee. The hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Baldwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact I did have a number—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Is the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) rising on a point of order?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I am raising a point of order in order to seek clarification for my participation in the debate which, I can assure you, will be very soon. In view of your admonition with respect to past practice, will I now be denied the right to make reference to the proceedings of the committee that is presently functioning? For instance, the hon. gentleman has made some rather serious charges against me personally—

Mr. Baldwin: No, no.

Mr. Mackasey:—which could, so far as I am concerned, place my seat in jeopardy because I, too, will have charges to make. They are based on allegations made today and on statements made before the committee by Mr. Cousineau, and I wonder if I will have the same opportunity in reply to refer to the same extent to the hearings of the Committee presently constituted.

• (1630)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This is precisely the point at which the Chair finds itself in difficulty. My suggestion is that the allegation, other than the particular time schedule of which I spoke, should not be referred to in debate at this time. This leaves the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) free to pursue his remedy, if he feels himself aggrieved, in the committee where the allegations have been made. I was not aware that matters which arose strictly in that committee were put on the record here. If I am wrong, then the hon. member will have a chance to correct that and make his own defence when he is recognized.

[Translation]

Mr. Leblanc (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

It is my intention to reply to the previous speaker because I was present at all the proceedings of the standing committee to which he made frequent reference. He told us things that are not quite accurate about the statements made by Mr. Guy Cousineau, the Chairman of the Unemployment Insurance Commission and he also put his own interpretations on statements of the auditor general. I feel we should have the same privilege when we take part in the debate, namely be able to refer to the same sources as the others, and to reply.

[English]

Mr. McGrath: You are supposed to be the impartial chairman of the committee.

Mr. Nielsen: On the point of order raised by the Chair, Mr. Speaker, I have listened very carefully to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and I have not heard him, contrary to the remarks of the hon. member who has just spoken, make any reference that was in any way not in keeping with the evidence adduced before the committee. The minister was the first offender in that regard. Perhaps Your Honour did not hear me at the time the minister commenced referring to the committee evidence. I asked for order and the Chair did not intervene. I mean no disrespect when I suggest this, Mr. Speaker. At the time that I called for order and since, the minister was given full latitude to discuss the evidence of the committee at his pleasure. While I appreciate the difficulty of the Chair, I think the door is open now in this regard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The point that the Chair was trying to make was that the references by the minister, as I recall it, and the references by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) again as I recall it, arising from the evidence given in that particular committee were to supply information to fill in a timetable of events leading up to the legislation we are dealing with at the present time. Perhaps some of the references went a bit too far, but I am now asking for the co-operation of hon. members not to refer to evidence given in a committee that has not reported to the House. It is a very elementary rule of our Procedure that this is irregular.

Mr. Nielsen: Curtail the minister, then.

Mr. Baldwin: I shall be glad to make my point with a simple reference to facts within my knowledge. There may be some facts which have been referred to in the committee, but they are facts which I know as well. I want to say right away, however, that as far as the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) is concerned, no personal allegation was made against him. There were statements made that the government was responsible.

Mr. MacEachen: Is deceit not a personal allegation?

Mr. Baldwin: The government was responsible for deceit. The government is a corporate body—I think it is a dying body but the government was deceitful.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Our last respects to the deceased.

Mr. MacEachen: You can't weasel out of it that way. The charge was deceit against the minister personally, and members of the government.