

When I brought this matter up in the last round of committee meetings, the Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Cafik) said that in 1973 the then president of the privy council said he did not mind if we were involved in provincial activity. In a moment I shall show how selective he was in choosing that quotation because the former president of the privy council stated the exact opposite.

As I have already said, there is no doubt that the three major political parties are using this provision to fund provincial organizations. This is unfair. The Liberal party in Quebec can use the federal Liberal structure to fund itself, for instance, but the Union Nationale party cannot use it as it has no federal counterpart and is not registered nationally. Neither can the Parti Québécois. The Social Credit party can use it, because it is both national and provincial.

It is well known that federal tax moneys were used in the last municipal election in the city of Winnipeg. A New Democratic Party candidate ran for mayor and was funded by federal tax dollars. But the use of this system, laundering the money at the federal level and directing it in this way, he was able to run his campaign. That is how wide open this is, Mr. Speaker. We can fund municipal elections in the same way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please.

Mr. Cafik: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wonder if I could ask the unanimous consent of the House to revert to motions to tidy up one small housekeeping matter.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

STANDING COMMITTEE AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL TO U.S.A.

Hon. Norman A. Cafik (Minister of State)(Multiculturalism) moved:

That members of the Standing Committee of Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs be granted leave to travel outside Canada, namely, to Washington, D.C., U.S.A., for a period of up to four days while the House is adjourned, for the purpose of studying problems relating to the management of national economies in the 1970s, and that the necessary staff accompany the members on the inquiry.

Motion agreed to.

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Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Your Honour will recall that during the question period matters were raised by the hon. member for St. John's East with respect to the announcement of the details of the FLIP program. The President of the Treasury Board indicated that he would not make a statement on motions with respect to it, but that he would be making a statement later in the day.

Privilege—Mr. McGrath

Part of his rationale for following the course that is apparent under the rules was that members of the House would receive in their offices the statement that he was to make at his press conference.

I have raised this matter before. It has come to my attention that members of parliament will receive the statement tomorrow. As has been argued before, in other cases, there ought to be a statement on motions regarding government announcements.

● (1702)

The minister is in contempt of this House because he did not make a very short statement in this chamber on a program which is significant enough to cause him to scutter across Wellington Street for a press conference. There are rules for short replies and reasonably short question periods in circumstances such as this. I have raised this point because I feel very strongly about it. The government is holding the House in contempt by doing this, especially when members will not receive written notice until tomorrow, and the press conference took place today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Before the parliamentary secretary speaks on this point of order, I should like to remind the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton that perhaps he has a matter of grievance, but the Chair cannot recognize it as a point of order or a question of privilege.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. McGRATH—STATEMENTS MADE BY MINISTERS OUTSIDE HOUSE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the point of order of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton is not proper, but I have a proper question of privilege. If I am wrong, I will apologize to the House and to the minister. In reply to a question today, the minister indicated that I would have the details of his statement delivered to my office. When I returned to my office, knowing the minister was meeting with the press at three o'clock, I called his office in order to find out at what time we could expect receipt of his statement. I was informed that we would not receive it until tomorrow. Inadvertently or otherwise, it seems to me the minister has seriously misled the House on this important matter. As long as ministers treat the House contemptuously, then they are responsible for delaying the proceedings of the House. Every time that occurs we will raise it as a question of privilege or a point of order.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I call your attention to Standing Order 16 which says that the proceedings on private members' business shall not be suspended except as provided for in