

Regional Economic Expansion Information

MR. MARCHAND (LANGELIER): At present there is no application from the company, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out that the firm of A. Belanger Ltée and the firm of Belanger-Tappan Limited are one and the same. In the words of the law, "the matter speaks for itself". I will not go beyond pointing out that the apparent conflict between the statement made in the document that was issued under the authority of the minister and the statement voluntarily made by the minister in the House is such as can only be investigated in a committee of this House where witnesses can be called, put under oath, questioned and cross-examined. I believe it is the right and due of any member to obtain correct information from ministers of the Crown. That right is the very keystone of the privileges of the parliamentary process.

Therefore, with your approval, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin):

That the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections forthwith inquire into and report upon the matter of the information published by the government relating to federal grants to A. Belanger Ltée, a Montreal firm, for projects at Montmagny, Quebec, and the information given to the House by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion during oral questions on the 28th February, 1972 in reply to the member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. McBride) respecting "Closing of Carleton Place Factory by Belanger-Tappan Limited—Inquiry as to Grant for Montmagny Plant", and that the report of the committee, with its recommendations thereon, be made to the House as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East has filed with the Chair the notice required under the terms of Standing Order 17. With respect, I suggest to the hon. member that the matter which he proposes for consideration by the House cannot come before us by way of a breach of parliamentary privilege. I remind him and all hon. members that the whole question of the administration of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, including the question of the minister's administration, is now before the Standing Committee on Regional Development. I would suggest that the hon. member's claim that there is a discrepancy between a verbal reply given by the minister and a publication issued by his department should be considered by the Standing Committee on Regional Development rather than by the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The hon. member suggests in his presentation to the House that this kind of matter should be considered in committee where witnesses can be called and examined. I would think that that could be done and should be done not by way of breach of privilege of the House but in the appropriate committee. There is a long line of rulings, as the hon. member knows, that discrepancies between statements made by a minister cannot be brought up in the House for consideration by way of a breach of parliamentary privilege.

Therefore, consistent with long-established practice I have to rule that there is not a prima facie case of privilege to be considered by the House at this time.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could rephrase the motion?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Whether the motion were to refer the matter to another committee or not, the decision of the Chair is that this kind of matter cannot be consid-

[Mr. McGrath.]

ered to be a breach of parliamentary privilege. Even if the motion were changed I could not agree to putting the matter to the House for discussion and debate by way of a question of privilege.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

POWER

TABLING OF MEMORANDUM ON AGREEMENT WITH NOVA SCOTIA AND NEW BRUNSWICK FOR STUDY OF FUNDY TIDES

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Baldwin: The minister is always moving about.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I have found I have to keep moving, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Baldwin: Why does the minister not move forward instead of backwards?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is an expert on that.

Mr. Baldwin: I certainly am, having watched the minister.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 41(2) I should like to lay on the table a memorandum with respect to an agreement between the premiers of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and myself on behalf of the federal government concerning a review board to study the question of tidal power in the Bay of Fundy and setting out terms of reference and also the personnel appointed by each of the three governments.

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GRAIN

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INITIAL PAYMENTS FOR WHEAT, OATS AND BARLEY FOR NEXT CROP YEAR

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the practice established by the government for the first time last year of announcing initial payments for wheat, oats and barley prior to seeding time, I wish to inform the House of the level of initial payments which will become effective for purchases by the Canadian Wheat Board for the crop year commencing August 1, 1972.

For the basic grade of wheat, No. 1 Canada Western Red Spring Wheat, the initial payment will be \$1.46 per bushel, the same as in the current crop year. The initial payment for No. 3 Canada Western Six-Row Barley will be 96 cents per bushel, an increase of 5 cents on the level presently in effect. The initial payment for No. 2 Canada Western Oats will be 60 cents per bushel, unchanged from the current crop year. All initial payments are basis in store Thunder Bay.