

financial community here in Canada, the financial markets and the like. Therefore, I had suggested through my representative to the House of Commons finance committee that it would be better if Governor Bouey were to appear first and I appear after the governor.

It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that I cannot appear before the House of Commons finance committee when I am out of town. As far as this week is concerned, I had a previous engagement to meet the four western provincial ministers of finance on Wednesday. I could not appear before the House of Commons finance committee on such an important matter on Thursday without having some time to be briefed. In my brief experience on the finance committee during the previous Parliament, it always accommodated itself to the fact that the previous minister of finance would try to arrange his schedule in order to appear. The committee knew of the busy schedule which the minister of finance keeps, so they tried to accommodate him when he was in town and not here in the House with all his legislative responsibilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am not in defiance of any committee of this House, nor do I intend to be in defiance of any committee of this House. If the House of Commons finance committee had ignored my suggestions to them and had told me that they were inviting me to come to the committee before Governor Bouey and would not consider anything else, what option would I have as a member of this House but to go? I would have therefore gone as requested, but it would have been unreasonable.

If hon. members opposite are upset because I am supposed to have refused to go before the House of Commons finance committee, they have nothing to be upset about. I hope that my explanation will put their minds at rest. I am and always will be a humble servant of the House of Commons finance committee and of this House.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. FOSTER—NORTHERN PIPELINES—INQUIRY WHICH MINISTER TO APPEAR BEFORE STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the President of Privy Council (Mr. Baker) would clarify which minister will be reporting to the House of Commons concerning the northern gas pipeline. A statement from the Prime Minister's office a few days ago indicated that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Senator de Cotret, would be responsible for this project, but it did not indicate which minister would be responding to questions within the House. Nor is there an indication in another statement from Senator de Cotret whether this matter has been delegated to one of his junior ministers here in the House. I find it passing strange that the largest private enterprise project in Canadian history would be turned over by a minister here in the House to a minister not present in the House. I would like to know who will be responsible for this matter in

Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez

situations such as appearing before the Standing Committee on Northern Pipelines. Could the President of Privy Council clarify that matter for me, please?

Hon. Walter Baker (President of Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I would assume that the minister responsible will be appearing before the committee, if that is what is concerning the hon. member. If there is any question which I have missed, I would be happy to discuss that matter with him.

Mr. Foster: The matter of questions in the House.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): With respect to answers in the House, I can be responsible for those answers, subject to whatever change may follow.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. RODRIGUEZ—PROCEEDINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS—CLARIFICATION BY MINISTER

Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the question of privilege spoken to by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) if I am not mistaken, and if my memory serves me correctly, he just told the House that he was never invited by the finance committee to appear before the committee before Governor Bouey. The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke) is present in the House, and he is the chairman of the finance committee.

Mr. Crosbie: I never said that.

Mr. Rae: *Hansard* will have recorded what the minister said, but that is my recollection of what he said. The clear understanding at the meeting of the steering committee was that the Minister of Finance would appear first. We then went away for the weekend. When we returned I read in the notice of the next meeting that on Tuesday night we would be considering the future program. I immediately phoned the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra and asked what was happening, because I had understood that on Tuesday night we would be considering estimates. At that time the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra said, and I am quoting him from memory, "Crosbie wants Bouey to go first."

That is what the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra told me. Is the Minister of Finance telling this House that he did not have conversations with the member for Vancouver Quadra, at which time the hon. member had a moral obligation to tell the Minister of Finance what the unanimous wishes of the steering committee were? Is the Minister of Finance telling this House that he did not express some concern to the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra about the order in which people would be presented to the finance committee?