

to answering it if I knew how to distinguish between commissions, price spreads, and various other rewards. My hon. friend will appreciate that War Assets Corporation deals on a wholesale basis, and that it is difficult to distinguish commissions from price spreads. I would refer him to Campion, page 130, who has a ruling on this point, as follows:

The following are out of order as raising matters for dealing with which the rules provide a more convenient method, viz.—

Questions reflecting on the conduct of certain persons whose conduct may only be challenged on a substantive motion;

Suggesting amendments to bills, or asking for information which should be moved for as a return—

I call particular attention to this:

—or dealing with matters before a parliamentary committee.

I ask that this question be dropped. The same applies to three subsequent questions, Nos. 54, 62 and 65, all of which are difficult to answer and all of which refer to matters that are being dealt with by a parliamentary committee.

Mr. GRAYDON: The minister has evidently been reading another kind of literature lately.

Mr. COLDWELL: What was the authority quoted?

Mr. HOWE: It is Campion's "An Introduction to the Procedure of the House of Commons".

Mr. GRAYDON: Just an introduction.

Mr. HOWE: I am assured that G. F. M. Campion is one of the leading authorities.

Mr. COLDWELL: Have we not rules of our own in this house? If we are going to hunt all over the shop to find various authorities we can find one to support anything. This would seem to make the rules of parliament like the bible, subject to individual interpretation.

Mr. HOWE: I am glad to refer my hon. friend to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, second edition, citations 664 and 665, which cover the same point.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I placed this question on the order paper last October or November and it was not answered last session although I was promised an answer right up to the last day of the session. It simply asks:

What persons or companies, if any, have been paid or allowed commission by surplus War Assets Corporation on sales or exchange of goods by that corporation?

I understand that commissions have been granted, and whether you call them commis-

[Mr. Howe.]

sions or price spreads I think the house is entitled to know what commissions have been granted to these companies on the sale or exchange of goods through War Assets Corporation. The minister says that the matter came before the parliamentary committee last year. I withdrew my question last year because the matter was supposed to be gone into by the committee, but nothing was done about it. The committee met only eight times, and we were unable to get the information. I want this question to stand. I do not intend to withdraw it unless ordered to do so by the house.

Mr. HOWE: My hon. friend I think is a member of the committee, and it meets tomorrow.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I am not a member of the committee.

Mr. HOWE: It is a perfectly proper question to go before the committee. The officers are there to furnish answers to questions asked. If my hon. friend does not want to distinguish between commissions and price spreads, if we include both, it would run into several hundred transactions and it might not be possible for our people to sort out all the transactions where either commission or price spreads were allowed.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I understand that sales were made by War Assets to companies and commissions allowed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. The answer given by the minister is not debatable.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to debate the minister's answer, but have I not the right to find out why a perfectly reasonable question like No. 65, to which none of the statements made by the minister apply should be dropped? The question reads—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. It is the rule and practice in this house that an answer given by a minister to a question is not debatable, but if hon. members wish to amend the standing orders of the house, that is their privilege. So far as the two other questions mentioned by the minister are concerned, the hon. member can ask for an explanation when we reach them. Question dropped.

NATIONAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION CONVERSION PLAN

Mr. LENNARD:

1. Is the National Housing Administration conversion plan being extended in Canada?

2. If not, when did the extension cease, and why?