

Transport Departmental Changes

by the hon. member for Crowfoot. A very similar point was raised by the hon. member for Sainte-Marie the other day.

On the basis of the jurisprudence and previous decisions, the Chair has had to come to the conclusion that the matter should not be put to the House as a question of privilege. This being so and particularly since there is no motion and in view, as I said, of the precedents in the matter, I would not think that this matter should give rise to a debate.

● (2:20 p.m.)

The Minister of Transport seems anxious to reply. I doubt whether that should be allowed. If the minister is allowed to reply, at that point we will have a debate on a question of privilege and I do not think we should proceed on that basis. In this instance I have to make the same ruling as has been made in the past by previous Speakers and by myself on a few previous occasions. I think we should go on to another subject.

Mr. Jamieson: May I rise on a question of privilege?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister can rise on a new question of privilege.

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, merely for the record and not in any debating form or anything of that nature, I simply want to record the fact out of respect for this House and out of respect for the principle which the hon. member for Crowfoot raised, I did in fact last night invite the members of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications and any other interested members to a full briefing on this matter before, indeed, it was released.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Obviously we are getting involved in a debate. The hon. minister has sought to reply to the hon. member on his own question of privilege. I have to rule for the minister the same way I ruled for the hon. member. I told the hon. member there could be no debate on his question since there was no question of privilege. The minister sought the floor on his own question of privilege. I have to rule that there is no question of privilege and there should be no debate on that question either. This may go on for a long time. The hon. member is rising on a third question of privilege?

An hon. Member: A second for him.

Mr. Horner: This is a new question of privilege and I am raising it at the very earli-

[Mr. Speaker.]

est opportunity, which I understand is when a question of privilege should be raised. The question of privilege I raise at this opportune time is that the minister did call a special committee meeting but my office was not informed of the time. A committee meeting called in such an informal manner should not and cannot supplant the House of Commons.

An hon. Member: Right.

Mr. Horner: It was only called for those people who were lucky enough to hear of the calling and were available for the meeting. It was in camera. It had nothing to do with the procedures in this House. As I understand Beauchesne, citation 100, paragraph (7), which deals with this whole subject matter, it can only be judged by the House itself. I believe—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member does not interpret Beauchesne as it ought to be interpreted. I say this in fairness to the hon. member. My interpretation, and I believe it is the traditional interpretation, is that a decision has to be taken by the House when the Chair has ruled there is a *prima facie* case of privilege. This is a decision which in all instances the Chair unfortunately has the duty and responsibility to render. My thought when the hon. member raised the point originally was that because of precedents it could not be raised as a question of privilege. I was hoping the minister would not raise the subsequent question of privilege; however, he did.

The hon. member is rising on another question of privilege. I have to rule again that this is a matter for debate with reference to a long-standing grievance which individual members may very well have against the executive. Unfortunately for the hon. member and for other hon. members who feel the same way as he does, that such statements should be made in the House rather than outside the House, the weight of jurisprudence is there to say that the matter cannot be debated. The Chair is in the position of having to rule that it is not a question of privilege, although it may be a very legitimate grievance.

I seek the assistance of hon. members to go on with the business of the chamber. I realize this is an important question. Maybe I should look into the matter further, but I believe from time to time I have looked into it quite closely. For the moment I ask the assistance of hon. members to allow the House to go on with another subject.