

Point of Order—Mr. Clark

court did decide that inmates should have the right to vote, we would proceed in the way we are proceeding now. Because Quebec made that decision we will try to accommodate that decision as best we can.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**INCREASED COST OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO MUNICIPALITIES**

Mr. Al MacBain (Niagara Falls): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General. It deals with the RCMP negotiating contracts, particularly with the municipalities, and the extra cost that will result to municipalities as a result of bringing the RCMP fee for service into line. I do not necessarily ask the Solicitor General that they stop proceeding in that manner, but will he consider phasing in those additional costs over a period of, for example, four to six years? As a former municipal alderman I can tell hon. members that any big budget item that changes drastically in any one year upsets municipal financing.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, Canada has provided the services of the RCMP to provinces and municipalities for almost 70 years. The contracts, which expire every five or ten years, will expire at the end of this month. I have begun a process of negotiating with my provincial counterparts, who not only speak for the provinces but who represent the municipalities as well. I think we have resolved virtually all questions except the financial question. I indicated last week that I was prepared to discuss a generous phasing-in arrangement for municipalities, but not because the offer we made is unfair.

I think the offer we have made will still give them cheaper police service than they would have, for example, if they chose to establish independent police forces. Recognizing that the increase is substantial, I am prepared to discuss with them a phase-in proposal. I am only waiting now for my counterparts to agree to some date. I would be ready to meet them tomorrow or at any time, at any place in Canada, in order to try to settle these financial arrangements as quickly as possible.

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POINT OF ORDER**MR. CLARK—THE CONSTITUTION—APPEAL TO SUPREME COURT—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER**

Madam Speaker: Yesterday the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) raised a point of order to the effect that the House cannot debate the motion of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) since, in his opinion, the matter is presently sub judice.

I listened to his arguments and I promised that I would rule narrowly on the basis of the arguments he presented in the House. In his argument he quoted Citation 338(4) of Beau-

chesne's fifth edition, which I need not repeat here. I should point out, however, that this citation deals with bills referred to the Supreme Court of Canada—bills, I repeat—and not with motions.

Sub judice is a convention which is "a voluntary restraint imposed by the House upon itself in the interests of justice and fair play", as stated in Citation 335 of Beauchesne's fifth edition. I have not been persuaded by the particular argument brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition which he offered in his presentation yesterday, namely, that the House cannot debate that motion because the matter has been referred to the Supreme Court of Canada.

MR. CLARK—NOTICE OF INTENTION TO RAISE POINT OF ORDER

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I rise on a very brief point of order. As I indicated yesterday, and as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) again invited me to pursue today, there is a second point of order on this question which I wish to pursue after any questions of privilege that might be before the House are heard. I will be pursuing that matter because it does not deal with the questions that have been covered by your judgment.

Madam Speaker: I will take that as notice. I want to remind hon. members of what took place in the House last night. I remind them that points of order have to be pertinent to the matter before the House. The only reason I could accept the point of order of the Leader of the Opposition yesterday was that it flowed from the deliberations of the House yesterday. If that is the case again today, of course, I will be able to hear his point of order. I would hear it now, but I understand the Leader of the Opposition defers to the other questions of privilege.

Mr. Clark: Yes, Madam Speaker.

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PRIVILEGE**MR. WILSON—REPLIES OF MR. LALONDE RESPECTING NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM**

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question of privilege, as I mentioned yesterday, relates to answers given to me by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) to a question I posed on Wednesday and other questions relating to the National Energy Program and drilling activity by oil drilling companies in this country, questions dating back to December and January earlier in this session.

On each occasion that I put questions relating to the expectations of the energy program, the minister repeatedly stated that we were taking a very gloomy view of the effects of the National Energy Program. He said our fears were unfounded. On a number of occasions he used the words "doom and gloom". We on this side, as well as members of the drilling