

been more interested in the report. There are two Members from the New Democratic Party who were also on that committee.

In that report, which is very important, the committee said the following, and I will be as brief as I can. The Government has said that it is very interested in parliamentary reform and the role of the backbencher. I wish it would give a couple of minutes here to this because it is extremely important. The committee said unanimously:

The Commission is composed by law of members of the Privy Council. In practice, only Cabinet Ministers have been Commissioners, although there is nothing to preclude the appointment of Privy Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet including members of the opposition.

We went on to say:

Your Committee believes it is essential that the House of Commons Act be amended to restructure the Board of Internal Economy. We do not feel that it is appropriate for only Cabinet Ministers to be responsible for the internal management of the House of Commons. The House of Commons is a community of many interests. They should be reflected in the way Commissioners are appointed.

Consequently your Committee proposes that a new Board of Internal Economy be set up—

And the committee recommended that we modify:

—the make-up of the Board by enlarging the range of its members to ensure the participation of Members of Parliament who are not Cabinet members. The Board would in future be composed of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, two Ministers of the Crown, the Leader of the Official Opposition or a Member designated by the Leader, and four others: two Members appointed by the government caucus, and two from the opposition caucuses—

I appreciate that we have not had time to amend the House of Commons Act, but I would be sincerely interested in learning the intentions of the Government with respect to this important matter. In particular, I urge it to reconsider the matter and to appoint a commissioner who is a Privy Councillor from the Opposition in accordance with the spirit of this report that was supported by 10 members of the Conservative Party when they served with that committee. If the Government is as sincerely interested in parliamentary reform as it alleges in the Speech from the Throne, let it start with these 10 reports which have already been made by this House.

● (1620)

**Mr. Speaker:** I am prepared to rule but I am in some quandary because of the traditions of the House.

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of State (Government House Leader)):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few things because I know that the motion put by the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) was meant sincerely and was not meant for any partisan advantage at this point in time it being so early on in the course of our deliberations. I simply say to you, Mr. Speaker, that it cannot be a question of privilege because, if it were a question of privilege, it would have been a question of privilege during the course of the previous administration's mandate. I did not hear the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East rise and make an impassioned speech on behalf of this particular provision.

**Mr. Allmand:** We both signed the report.

### *Appointments*

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** I was a member of that committee.

I would like to make a second observation, Mr. Speaker. If the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East had paid attention to the content of the Speech from the Throne, he obviously would have heard the part about the powers and the full extent of the examination that will take place with respect to the reform of the House of Commons and that it is very much a high priority with the Government.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, I simply say to you, regarding the technical side of it, that it cannot be a question of privilege. I can assure the Hon. Member that we are serious about parliamentary reform and that we will make progress where the previous administration could not.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) has raised what I personally believe is an interesting matter, and I will say no more on that side of it. He has quite rightly recalled the report of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure of the last Parliament and indeed has noted that the report has not been adopted by the House. The appointment of the commissioners is a statutory provision and not a matter within the direct responsibility of the Speaker. The House of Commons Act requires commissioners to be Privy Councillors, and the selection of those Privy Councillors is the privilege of the Governor in Council. To appoint a Member of the House of Commons who is not a Privy Councillor would, as the Hon. Member knows, require an amendment to the statute. He did not raise that point.

If I recall correctly, the special committee recommended specifically that the relevant statute be amended and went as far as appending a draft Bill to its report. While the Hon. Member has raised an interesting point, it is clearly neither a point of order nor a point of privilege. However, I can assure him the Chair looks forward with interest to future developments in this area.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### APPOINTMENT OF STRIKING COMMITTEE

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That a committee be appointed to prepare and report, in accordance with Standing Order 69, lists of Members to compose the Standing and Standing Joint Committees of this House; and

That the committee be composed of Messrs. Cook, Deans, Dick, Friesen, Gauthier, Hnatyshyn and McGrath.

Motion agreed to.