

Routine Proceedings

that it was not in fact followed in the case of the actions of the hon. member for Mississauga South. I refer specifically to something which bothered me particularly. As my colleague for Edmonton East indicated in the discussion of this matter last week, one of the particular points which comes to be important is whether a chairperson of the committee can take action when that action is something which is already covered by the rules set down in our Standing Orders.

In the case of the particular action taken by the member for Mississauga South, his action was to deem withdrawn the motion which was on the floor of the committee. That, as the member for Edmonton East indicated, is something that is covered in the Standing Orders. For such a withdrawal of a motion to take place, unanimous consent is required. The member for Mississauga South claimed that the preceding incident as I will refer to it and as the Speaker referred to it, was, in fact, a precedent which permitted him, as chairman, to deem such a motion withdrawn. In fact, in further detailed checking the so-called Lachance incident in 1984, we find that no such action was taken by chairperson Lachance. Chairperson Lachance instead suspended the motion which was in front of the committee, and then announced his ruling with respect to the further points of importance to the committee's further activities. At that point, he put forward his intention to resign. What we find, Mr. Speaker, with further perusal of Mr. Lachance's decision is that the decision was not followed by the member for Mississauga South with respect to his procedures within this committee.

Therefore, we have without doubt a clear precedent, a clear breaking of the ice made by the chair of this committee, something which he claimed in committee when, following the suggestions of the Speaker, we raised these questions on Monday in committee and the chair of the finance committee claimed that it was Mr. Lachance who had broken the ice.

• (1300)

In fact, the chairman of the finance committee himself had taken a procedure with respect to deeming a motion withdrawn, something which is quite clearly set out in the rules that we have to follow in this House and in

committee. He took that position without any previous incident or event to which he could refer.

All of these questions have been raised in committee, so this is not the first time they have been raised. Having raised them in committee, I feel I must raise them here now because the only protection for the minority and ultimately for the majority is that the democratic rules which are set down for Parliament must be followed. They cannot be picked and chosen on the part of committee chairmen or the Speaker of the House. They are rules which govern us all. That is what the rule of law is about in my view and, as a member of the finance committee, that is why I feel that this is such a crucial issue to bring before the House of Commons itself.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton East and then the hon. member for Kingston and The Islands.

I would just like to state for hon. members that the Speaker has already stated in his ruling that neither the Lachance incident nor the Blenkarn ruling should be treated as a precedent. The Chair has already stated that, so I concur with the hon. member's remarks.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I raised that point simply because even after the Speaker's ruling, the chairman of the finance committee continued to insist that in fact the Lachance ruling was a precedent and that the Speaker's ruling in this House on Monday had supported the chairman of the committee in making that point.

This is why it is especially important that this be dealt with in the Speaker's ruling on this further point of order.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, before briefly considering two aspects of the question before you, I wish to summarize the central contention, which is that the process by which the standing committee arrived at its report was so flawed and irregular as to render the report inadmissible in this House at this time. That is the central contention.

The report that is now to be laid before the House comes here solely by virtue of the clear violation of Standing Orders 64 and 67. That in itself should, I submit, be sufficient to deem the report inadmissible.

Further, there is the matter of the non-resolution of a privileged motion placed before the committee by the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville this week. That that