

**Mr. Caccia:** No, Mr. Speaker, a question in relation to the speech that the hon. member completed just before his point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is perhaps a little embarrassing, but I do not want to obstruct the interesting work of the House. If the hon. member for St. Paul's is interested in allowing a question from his colleague from Toronto, I suppose the rest of us should not object.

**Mr. Atkey:** Mr. Speaker, I have no objection, although I hope you could get on with your ruling as soon as possible, in the interests of expediting the work of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am prepared to move with my ruling, but I gather the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has some words of wisdom.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I will keep them down, Mr. Speaker. I can think of three reasons why I should not take the floor.

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

**An hon. Member:** Try sitting down.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** That applause suggests there are four reasons, the fourth one being that the House would be just as happy if I took my seat. The first reason is that it is a bit difficult to speak on this point after Your Honour has suggested something about words of wisdom, and the second is that a few moments ago you said you did not want to deny us the pleasure of participating in debate. But the more important reason that would keep me from rising, although it has not succeeded in doing so, is that I find doing so a bit awkward.

This afternoon when we moved an amendment, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) raised a point of order against it. Now, if I speak procedurally against this one, it may look like tit-for-tat. I can assure Your Honour that is not the case but, rather, I rise because I think the consistency with which this House must act operates against this amendment being allowed. If I can be pardoned for one-half sentence on substance, I do not think this is a good enough reason for not voting on the main motion tonight.

This afternoon, His Honour the Deputy Speaker ruled our amendment out of order relying mainly on a sentence in citation 220(1) which reads in part:

If the subject matter of an instruction is within the scope of the question referred to the committee then such instruction is useless and irregular.

It was argued this afternoon that the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices is still in session and is going to meet tomorrow as well as on other occasions and needs no instruction from this House to permit it to consider matters that are within its terms of reference. I submit if that applied this afternoon, it applies tonight.

The hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Atkey) said that his amendment, unlike ours, does not raise a specific new topic. If I may paraphrase it, it seems to me that what he is saying is that his amendment just tells the committee to carry on with its work. Surely there is no place, especially in the light of this afternoon's ruling, for an amendment

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that simply tells the committee to do what it already has the right to do. That committee, when it meets on future occasions, could consider the consumer price index figures and other figures released last Thursday and make a third and a fourth report if it wishes.

I submit that there is not sufficient argument, either in substance or in terms of procedure, to tell the committee to do something it already has the power to do, and that the amendment is not in order.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, I do not rise as one thoroughly prepared to argue this question, since the mantle of acting House leader was cast on my shoulders only a few minutes ago. However, although I always have the greatest difficulty in disagreeing with the sage of the House of Commons on questions of procedural minutiae, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I personally find that the motion put by the hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Atkey) opens up in substance new vistas for debate.

● (2030)

I, personally, would have been delighted to have the opportunity of hearing debate on some of these interesting questions. Unfortunately, I am not here with any elaborate procedural argument. I hope the Chair might find the amendment acceptable so that we might continue with such interesting discussions as have been opened up by the hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Atkey).

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am afraid I must disappoint the amiable Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) who appears intent on supporting the procedural acceptability of the amendment moved by the hon. member for St. Paul's. I find it difficult to disagree with the ruling delivered to the House this afternoon by Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not agree with the hon. member for St. Paul's when he says it was a precedent. I am sure there can be found many precedents in the history of our deliberations to indicate that this kind of decision, having reference to proposed amendments to reports from standing committees, has been made in the House.

The hon. member for St. Paul's first gave to the Chair notice of his proposed amendment. I heard him reading the amendment. It seems to me at first blush, at second blush and perhaps at last blush, that this is an entirely new question. The hon. member must appreciate that there were terms of reference agreed to by this House going back, I believe, to January 23. Hon. members, by amendments or suggested amendments to a committee report or to a motion to do with a committee report, cannot try to rewrite the terms of reference which were agreed to by the House.

I heard earlier during this debate, perhaps at the opening of the debate while the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) had the floor, the suggestion that there should be an appreciation by the House of the work done by committees and an appreciation of the reports being made by committees. I agree very much with the thoughts expressed by the hon. member for St. John's East at the time. If the House agrees, I think we can go along with this idea by accepting the recommendation which has