

Speaker's Ruling

today. It is a very serious issue and I would hate to think we would seek a ruling on this without further input.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I am going to rule on it now. I am fully aware of the implications of this particular situation. Some hon. members have said they had no knowledge this was coming before the House. I hope all hon. members realize that when I receive a question of privilege, that is the privilege of the member applying until the member has risen. I know there was no suggestion the Chair should have communicated with members, but I hope all hon. members will know it would have been quite improper for the Chair to do so.

I compliment the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona on his argument and I compliment him on how concise it was. It was brief and to the point. I have listened with great care to the hon. member for Fraser Valley West who of course has a very strong personal interest in this particular matter.

The first thing I have to look at, and the hon. parliamentary secretary mentioned it, is that it is not for the Chair to get involved in matters within a committee unless there is something so egregious and so outrageous that it transcends the normal bounds and amounts to a contempt of the House or, in some extraordinary way, a breach of the privilege of an hon. member and this does not.

First of all, does it affect any hon. members' capacity to carry on their duties as members of the House of Commons? The answer to that is no. All members can carry on their duties as members of the House of Commons. The second thing is whether there is some other procedural approach that might be taken to deal with this matter in front of the whole House, as my hon. friend from Kamloops has suggested. Yes, there is. A motion can be put down.

I go back very briefly to a citation which the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona cited. I think I have the exact words: "The House should take cognizance of the matter".

That is really where we are. If the House wishes to take cognizance of this, if the House wishes to exercise its authority, then of course it may do so. But in my view,

it would not be correct or proper at the present time for the Speaker to intervene.

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[*Translation*]

POINT OF ORDER

REPORT OF THE BEAUDOIN-DOBBIE COMMITTEE

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order because I have just been informed that Friday at noon, the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee will table its report and hold a press conference or something like that. I have also been informed that starting at 9.30 a.m., journalists will have access to copies of the report before it is actually tabled in the House.

I know that most of my colleagues have had the privilege and the opportunity to be briefed on most of what the report contains within their own caucuses. Members of the bloc, the members of the Reform Party of Canada and the independents did not enjoy the same privilege. Perhaps it would be appropriate to follow our usual practice, as the Minister of Finance did for his budget yesterday, which is to allow the critics to be briefed or at least let them have as much information as the members of the press.

Mr. Speaker, I know you are here to maintain the good order of this House. Perhaps you could ask the parliamentary secretary to check into this, but I would appreciate it if we could follow our usual practice, since unlike other caucuses, we did not have a chance to be briefed. I think the real battle will be about substance, not procedure.

Mrs. Venne: The whole thing is insulting.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the problems of the hon. member and a number of other members, but the decision to have a lockup is made by the committee, not by the government. Since it is not a decision of this House, it is not up to me to intervene. I am sorry about the situation this has created for the hon. member, but I have no solution.

The hon. member, very briefly.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, in that case I would like to reserve the right to raise a question of privilege. Meanwhile you said it was a decision by the committee, but we all know that decisions are often made by the majority on