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# JOURNALS

OF THE

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### OF CANADA

OTTAWA, MONDAY, MAY 26, 1975

2.00 o'clock p.m.

## PRAYERS

## RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: On Friday, May 16, 1975, the honourable Member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) raised a question of privilege questioning the actions of honourable Members in leaving one of the standing committees and in turn questioning the action of the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs in allowing a minister to speak on the subject during which time honourable Members left the meeting and thereafter refusing to put a question because of a lack of quorum.

I indicated at the time in hearing the honourable Member for York-Simcoe that my preliminary indications was that the Chair would not, and that I would re-emphasize then that the Chair would not, sit in appeal of decisions which have taken place in a standing committee. Because of the raising of this very interesting point, I undertook to re-examine the precedents. I have done so, and I cannot find any ground which should cause me to change my mind or to recommend to the House a change in that practice.

I might say, secondly, that the honourable Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) who was at the time of the

honourable Member's complaint the Chairman of that Committee and still is, but who has declined to act for an interim period pending the resolution of these matters, on the following day raised a question of privilege which took exception to the language of the honourable Member for York-Simcoe in describing the actions of the Chairman as being part of an obstruction of the work of the Committee.

In respect of the word "obstruction", several meanings have been ascribed to it. One does not have to examine the precedents. It is not an infrequent occurrence in this House that one side refers to the actions of the other side as being an obstruction of one kind or another, so much so that on one occasion where precedent does provide some assistance, the use of the word "obstruction" in respect to an individual and specific Member was found to be not out of order, and I cite page 419 of May's Eighteenth Edition.

There cannot be much doubt, however, that the role of a chairman is considerably different in some respects, and because of the special connotation where the work of a chairman of a standing committee is involved and because of the accepted practice of refraining from commenting on the actions of the chairman, it may well be