

Privilege—Mr. Broadbent

ing this means that potentially we are going to duplicate the whole process of debate after we hear the decision of the NEB.

A number of members of the House could take a certain position on this legislation which affects the future of Canada in a profound way if we consider the amount of capital resources proposed to be allocated to the project. For example, members from the province of Saskatchewan, or from western Canada as regional spokesmen, and those of us who have a national perspective anyway—

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): What about Hamilton?

Mr. Broadbent: Yes, and what about Hamilton as the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) says. If we go ahead on the assumption that this bill is to be proceeded with if, and only if, low pressure pipe is to be used on the pipeline, that kind of pipe can be produced at the Ipsco plant in Regina, then a number of members in the House of Commons may well be disposed to support the bill on the ground that that assumption would prevail.

What happens if the National Energy Board in its wisdom, and God forbid, a week from today makes the decision that the kind of pipe to be used is high pressure pipe, pipe that cannot be produced at the Ipsco plant in Saskatchewan, but pipe that can be produced only in limited quantities in the province of Ontario? I suggest then, Mr. Speaker, that these members will have to reverse themselves in the debate if that factor were a predominant consideration to them in reaching their decision.

The serious point I want to make is that I am scandalized by the Deputy Prime Minister who, after all, has been around for a few years and is a rules expert, because he would get up and say to the members of the House of Commons that we can debate this for a number of days, taking up the time of the country discussing this capital project which will involve anywhere from \$10 billion to \$14 billion, but the debate means nothing because we do not have to vote on the bill until the National Energy Board makes its ruling. How absurd that is, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that makes a mockery of what debate in the House of Commons is supposed to be all about. We are supposed to engage in serious debate about which members on both sides of the House know the relevant facts before making up their minds.

I do not have a precise motion on the question of privilege before me and I want to hear what other members of the House have to say about this important question, but I will be happy to present one. In terms of the rules, to put it frankly, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to draft a motion that would be procedurally acceptable. I acknowledge that. The standard privilege motion is to refer a matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, asking it to report back, recommending when the matter should be debated. That is the procedural way of doing it. That does not seem to me to be an awful lot better than the kind of crazy decision the cabinet has already made.

What I am doing through this question of privilege is attempting to appeal to the common sense of the Deputy Prime Minister. If he is serious in wanting to have a debate

[Mr. Broadbent.]

that is meaningful to the people of Canada, on this project which is the largest in the history of Canada, then why does he not postpone it for a week? Why does he not say that he understands the NEB is to make a decision a week from today, hopefully, so we should have that information then, information which could affect hundreds of thousands of jobs, and we can hold the debate at that time? For God's sake, why does the government not proceed with other business today, and then when the NEB makes its decision we could call second reading and have a serious debate about the future of this project which will seriously affect the future of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has put forward his thesis which, as he has acknowledged, is procedurally outside the acceptable grounds of privilege. He has put it by way of an appeal to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen), and it is not the first such appeal. It may be the subject of considerable other discussions under other procedural forms as this matter unfolds. However, as the hon. member has recognized, it is the prerogative of the government of the day to call the legislation that is properly on the order paper in whatever order it wishes. There seems to be no connection with the classic definition of privilege, and I think it would be stretching that definition to the extreme to try to include it in that. Therefore I have to set aside this question of privilege.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Robert Young (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: 413, 559, 759 and 966.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[Text]

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS IN QUEBEC

Question No. 413—**Mr. McCleave:**

In each year since 1945, which buildings were erected in Hull for government purposes and, in each case, which department or agency used the building and for how many years?

Mr. Frank Maine (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Science and Technology):