

POINTS OF ORDER

MR. CAFIK—SUGGESTION PRIVILEGE MOTION BE DEFERRED

Hon. Norman A. Cafik (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order with respect to the question of privilege with which Your Honour dealt earlier, relating to the question raised by the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) and the suggestion of Your Honour that perhaps we should have a little time to reflect upon it, I wonder if it would be agreeable to defer the matter until tomorrow so that the House leaders can have an opportunity to discuss the most appropriate way of dealing with the question. I suggest this so that we might be able to resolve the issue. It would be helpful to us if we had that opportunity.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I hope we will not delay this kind of matter for another day. There has been quite an appropriate delay during which Your Honour had to read a considerable number of precedents. I think the issues are fairly clear, and I think we can deal with the matter in the normal way today. It is important that it be dealt with today, having regard to the nature of the matter. I hope that the motion will be put and that it will be referred by the House. However, I do not think we should delay another day.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think I should be clear on the practice which would ordinarily be followed. I think hon. members should understand that the question for the Chair is whether a motion put forward by any hon. member at any given time has with it that character of privilege which gives it priority over other business. If the Chair once decides that the matter does affect the privileges of members, the Chair then gives the motion priority on that basis. I think this is an accurate description of what has often been roughly described as *prima facie* questions of privilege, which is not really an accurate description. In any case, having made that finding, the matter then, by the very virtue of that decision, has priority over other business. If not, then the hon. member is quite often invited to try to reintroduce his motion in the ordinary way. However, in this case, having made that finding, the matter would proceed as a matter of priority over other House business.

If the Chair were to be advised that there had been some tentative agreement or preliminary agreement to defer the discussion to some other time, I would naturally take that into account. Failing any advice or agreement on that basis, I would have to put down the matter as a matter of priority business.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we would not object if there were a deferral for an hour or something like that, but I agree with the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) that the matter has been delayed long enough, that it ought to be dealt with today, and that in the absence of unanimous consent to set aside Your Honour's recommendation, it should proceed today.

Point of Order—Mr. W. Baker

Mr. Cafik: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be quite agreeable to our side if there were a delay for an hour so that we can decide, in the interests of all members of parliament, the best way to deal with this. We would be quite agreeable. If there were a specific motion before the House as a result of the ruling—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): There is.

Mr. Cafik: My understanding, and I may be incorrect, is that if it is a specific motion to refer the matter to a given committee, that is one question. If it is a motion which is debatable as a question of privilege without any particular course for the matter to take, I think then there would be reason to have some short delay for consultation between House leaders. It is unclear in my mind at this time.

Mr. Speaker: I think we should all realize that the language of the motion is such that it ought to be examined. That might be useful, bearing in mind that this matter is going to be put on the floor for discussion, if necessary, at some time today. I do not know. I think it is ordinary to expect that it ought to be examined to see whether there might be consent with respect to the disposition of the motion. That might very well be productive, so some short delay might be countenanced. However, I cannot impose that delay or initiate it. I would have to be advised that there is some agreement for delay of a few minutes or an hour or so, and therefore I will attend to other business to see whether there can be consultation and agreement.

MR. BAKER (GRENVILLE-CARLETON)—PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL FOR PEACEKEEPING FORCE

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to thank the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson) for delaying his departure from the House for a few moments. I know he is busy.

The hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) raised a very important point today in the question period, and that was the problem we face with respect to a request which may be made for peacekeeping forces in the Middle East and the relationship of that problem to discussion in this parliament of that matter, which would potentially commit Canadian armed forces from all across the country, from constituencies represented by hon. members in this House. I realize that the issue is tentative, but I also realize that events seem to be moving in such a direction that a request is going to be made.

I wonder if it would be appropriate if I were to suggest, in the course of this point of order, that the Secretary of State for External Affairs study the precedents, particularly the precedent which was created or acted upon in 1973, I believe it was, when a peacekeeping force was sent to Viet Nam. As I recollect it, on that occasion the then secretary of state for external affairs put down a resolution, and there was a day's debate on that matter so that the Parliament of Canada could express itself on what was quite an important thing in terms of the involvement itself and so that the government knew that