

Privilege

Mr. Boudria: This is from Erskine May. A Conservative member across the way asked what edition. It is from his *Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, Nineteenth Edition. That answers the question of the hon. member for Halifax West.

I want to submit to you that it is important for the privileges of this House that have been extended by this House to parliamentary committees to be able to function.

Mr. Cooper: This is out of order. That happened yesterday. It is out of order. This is 24 hours too late.

Mr. Lewis: This is too late.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I do believe that I gave notice of this point of privilege yesterday.

Mr. Gauthier: Don't be distracted by them. Get to the point.

Mr. Lewis: Yesterday was an opposition day.

Mr. Cooper: Yesterday at eleven o'clock. This happened at 9.30 yesterday morning.

Mr. Simmons: So you admit there are a couple of incidents.

Mr. Gauthier: That's right. They do it all the time.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, the incident that I bring to your attention is one that happened at five o'clock yesterday afternoon. It is too bad that some members heckling across the way are so ill informed as they usually are.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Boudria: Why don't you want to hear it? You're not going to go anywhere today unless you listen.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member complains, at least momentarily, of what is seen as heckling. The Chair of course in a situation like this always accepts comments that are made across the Chamber in as helpful a way as possibly can be interpreted.

The hon. member has the floor and is making an argument. I think it would be appropriate if we heard the hon. member.

Mr. Boudria: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order 116 of the House of Commons states:

In a standing, special or legislative committee, the Standing Orders shall apply so far as may be applicable, except—

And it lists a few exceptions here. It continues:

—the election of a Speaker, seconding of motions—

And so on. In other words, the Standing Orders of this House must apply to committees save and except a few exceptions that I previously listed. Those same Standing Orders of our House state quite clearly that one cannot discuss in the House an item which is not on the Order Paper.

What I am about to submit to you, Mr. Speaker, is that in fact the equivalent of that happened yesterday in a parliamentary committee of this House. If what happened yesterday is allowed to continue, I would suggest that none of the Standing Orders of the House, which have been duly passed by this House, would have any effect in committee whatsoever. By extension, I do believe that our privileges have been affected by what has happened. I do believe that such is the case.

A few days ago members of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations received notice of meeting, the committee equivalent of the Order Paper. The document which I have in hand, and which I would like to table before the House, is entitled '*Issue No. 23, Meeting No. 25, Notice of Meeting, Thursday, October 19, 3.30 p.m.*'

It says on the order paper that I have here, or the committee equivalent of the Order Paper, that the item to be considered is as follows: "Consideration of draft report on credit cards." Only one item appears on that order paper, therefore I submit that only one item could be considered by the committee yesterday.

It was also suggested that this meeting had to be *in camera*, although of course I suppose one could alter that if one wanted to. The point I am making is that yesterday afternoon, unbeknownst to members of the opposition, eight Conservative members, most of whom had never been seen at the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Gauthier: That is true, that is true.

Mr. Boudria: —because they are not regular members of that committee, were present. They immediately moved a motion that a witness who had been asked by a motion of that committee to testify on October 24 not be made to testify any longer.