

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I do not for a moment question Your Honour's ruling. However, that ruling does present the House with a terrible dilemma. As you know, under the rules all estimates are deemed to have been reported back to the House as of midnight, the end of May. If the Minister refuses to appear before the committee to defend his estimates—and he cannot be subpoenaed to appear before a committee—those estimates are deemed to have been reported back. That means the House has been denied the right to examine the estimates, which is the very essence of supply. In other words, Parliament is being denied one of its most important functions. I would ask Your Honour with respect: How do we get around that dilemma?

Mr. Speaker: The difficulty the Chair faces in recognizing the point made by the Hon. Member for St. John's East is that the Chair can hardly be aware of what is taking place in a committee without a report from the committee. The practice of what takes place before a committee is a matter of the committee's business. If and when a report is received from the committee—and presumably that report would be debated—there would be an opportunity for Hon. Members to express their views.

In all fairness, the Hon. Member for St. John's East has made a valid point and I always listen to him, but what does he expect the Chair to do under these circumstances? It is very difficult for the Chair to instruct a Minister, or to interfere with regard to the conduct of a committee's affairs. If the committee reports and there is a matter arising out of the committee's report of which the Chair can take notice, the Chair will do the appropriate thing. However, there is no report from the committee. The committee has its terms of reference. Therefore, under the circumstances there is nothing which appears to the Chair that can be done at this time.

The Hon. Member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton has been recognized three times. This will be the last time.

Mr. Dick: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do believe it is incumbent upon you perhaps to listen before making any final judgment in this matter.

Some Hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Dick: I have recognized in the 12 years in which I have been in the House that, because of changing circumstances from time to time, House business has been discussed other than on Thursdays. Yesterday when I attempted to raise this matter, Mr. Speaker, you suggested that it be brought to the House as a question. Unfortunately, it was not possible today for you to see me when I rose to put a question—

Mr. Speaker: With all due respect, the Chair was given a list of eight names from the Whip of the Hon. Member's Party, and there were certain difficulties.

Mr. Dick: I know that there were a number of other people recognized. However, it is an important matter because the committee is sitting tomorrow before Question Period. It is a simple matter of an undertaking by the Government which

Petitions

appears on page 3865 of *Hansard*, given by the Acting Prime Minister. I would expect as a matter of course in dealing with House business, that a straightforward reply could be given very easily.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has heard the Hon. Member now for the fourth time.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to try and answer his question tomorrow.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

REGULATIONS AND OTHER STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

PRESENTATION OF FIFTH REPORT OF STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages the Fifth Report (Statutory Instruments No. 24) of the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments.

[Editor's Note: For above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[English]

PETITION

MR. BLAIKIE—ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition by several hundred residents of northern Ontario who note that approximately 1,000 residents in the riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan must travel each year to Toronto and Winnipeg to receive medical treatment which is unavailable in northern Ontario. That represents an increase of 50 per cent to Toronto and an increase of 98 per cent to Winnipeg from 1976 to 1982. They also note that many of these residents must pay for the visits themselves or rely on charity. They note that the Canada Health Act calls for reasonable access to health services without undue financial barriers.

Therefore they call on Parliament to uphold the principles of the Canada Health Act and assure reasonable access to health services without undue financial barriers for the residents of northern Ontario.