

My earlier question of privilege was one which had to be dealt with by you, Mr. Speaker, since it was argued that the committee exceeded its jurisdiction. The decision of the majority of the committee to proceed with clause by clause, without first hearing the ruling of the Speaker, is I believe a display of contempt for the Speaker of this House. This is especially true, given the fact that the committee was given the option this morning of suspending clause-by-clause hearings and the majority of members of the committee chose not to wait for Your Honour's ruling.

I ask that the proceedings of the committee today be declared a nullity. I also ask that this matter be referred to an appropriate committee of this House for disciplinary action of the chair and the majority members of this committee.

Mr. Speaker: I have listened very carefully to what the hon. member is saying and I understand. I want the hon. member to know that I understand there is some dispute going on within the committee. It is not for me, at least at this point, to enter into one side or the other of that dispute.

The point the hon. member has raised is an interesting one. I will consider it very carefully and will report back, as of course I am obliged to do and which I would want to do. But I do want to make one thing clear: However I may report back, I do not think I have any power to interfere with the proceedings of the committee at this time.

I will take the hon. member's comments under advisement and I will return to the House to try to give an appropriate response as soon as possible. Again I thank the hon. member for his courtesy.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I listened carefully, along with others, to your ruling and I simply seek clarification on two points.

• (1515)

First, the evidence referred to in your deliberations, Mr. Speaker, was presented again yesterday. It was

exactly the same evidence and was accepted yesterday. In other words the evidence that was removed from the record one day was accepted the next, and I seek clarification on how this can be done.

Second, do we understand now that if members feel strongly—I think that was the term you used in your ruling—it means the majority through a motion can then eliminate from the record what has been said? Is it fair, now that we have assumed that is the case, that we might apply the same here in the House of Commons, that is if the majority of members of the House of Commons had strong feelings on an issue they could introduce a motion and again have *Hansard* stricken in terms of some of the evidence presented here?

Mr. Speaker: First of all I want to say to the House that the hon. House leader of the New Democratic Party, the hon. member for Kamloops, rises on this matter. The hon. member is a very experienced member of this House as we all know, and I am taking very carefully into account what he said.

The answer to the first part of the hon. member's question is this. As I understand it a completely different witness went in front of the committee and said much the same thing that had been said by the witness that had caused the committee to expunge the record at a prior time, and in this case the committee decided to do nothing but to hear it out. That of course is within the prerogative of the committee.

There certainly cannot be any criticism of the committee for having heard a witness and allowed the witness to say whatever it was, no matter how offensive some members of the committee may have thought it was. That is the answer to the first part of the question.

On the second part of the question I would ask the hon. member to perhaps find a moment this afternoon to look carefully at the recent opinion that I gave which basically comes down to this: The committee does not have to report all of its proceedings. I think the hon. member will see that is really what the judgment turns on, but if the hon. member is having further difficulty with it after having had a chance to look at it I would be pleased to discuss it with him.