

voice their concerns on the serious issues which have been raised in the discussion paper and which directly affect each and every member of the Armed Forces? I am not concerned with just the Minister or senior officials, but members of the Armed Forces themselves.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, my only observation is that if 83,000 members of the Armed Forces appeared before the committee, in our committee rooms as they are presently constituted, it would be a little crowded.

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● (1500)

MULTICULTURALISM

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE—RACE RELATIONS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): My question is directed to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism. This Tuesday's federal-provincial conference on multiculturalism was a dismal failure. Not only was it conducted behind closed doors, but when the doors were finally opened we found how empty that conference really was. I would like to ask a specific question on racism which the Minister irresponsibly said is outside his jurisdiction. How can the Minister make such a declaration when an integral part of his mandate and his directorate is within the race relations area? Was racism discussed around the table? If so, what strategic conclusions and recommendations can the Minister make at this time?

Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, first, the conference attended by all the Ministers was deemed by many people, most people in Winnipeg except for the Hon. Member, a success. It was the first time we have been able to get together to sit down and talk about one of the most important subjects in the country, namely, multiculturalism. We dealt with that in a spirit of co-operation and unity.

Dealing with the second part of the Hon. Member's question, I and the multicultural Department have a major responsibility for the area of race relations in Canada. If you take the very narrow definition, in terms of legislation it falls in our area. We have a major thrust in terms of fighting racism at every level of society. The Department and myself are committed to doing that, and I hope the Hon. Member is in agreement.

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CLERK OF PETITIONS' REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions, with the exception of two, presented on Wednesday, May 15, 1985, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

Point of Order—Mr. Gray (Windsor West)

The petitions presented by the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow) and the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) do not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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PRIVILEGE

RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege relating to the answer given today by the Minister of National Defence concerning participation by a Parliamentary committee on equality rights.

I would submit that the effect of the decision which has obviously been made by that Minister denies the right of Members of Parliament to hear from important witnesses on matters of concern before this Parliament. What that Minister is doing is denying Members of the Armed Forces the right to appear—

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is clearly argument arising out of Question Period. It is not a question of Privilege. The Member may have a point he wishes to make, but he will have to find a different arena.

Mr. Deans: It is a very good point.

Mr. Speaker: Before we get to the business question, because of the nature of the point of order that was made to me yesterday, I must at this point indicate my decision on that matter. One way or the other it might have an effect.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: It might be asking for a lot.

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POINT OF ORDER

NOTICE OF MOTION—STANDING ORDER 82—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the Point of Order raised yesterday by the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) relating to a Notice of Motion on the Order Paper under Government Notices of Motion concerning a proposed allocation of time motion.

The Hon. Member for Windsor West is quite right in saying that the contemporary practice has been to propose motions pursuant to S.O. 82 on Routine Proceedings without written notice. I also agree with him that the Government can give written notice to the House of the actual text of the motion. Rulings by my predecessors having clearly established that no written notice is required but as the Hon. Member for Windsor West has stated a Minister of the Crown may, if he so chooses, give written notice of a motion of allocation of time and I concur with him that our rules do not prevent this.