

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 6, 1969

The House met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. BROADBENT—ALLEGED FAILURE TO INVESTIGATE AUTOMOBILE PRICE INCREASES

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Late in the last session of Parliament the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs asserted that if the automobile companies introduced a substantial increase in the price of their 1970 models he would undertake an investigation of their pricing policies. Yesterday in the House, when I asked what had been done by the minister since the automobile manufacturers announced higher prices for their new 1970 models, he reneged on this commitment to the people of Canada.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if you agree with me I should like to move that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I notice that the President of the Privy Council wishes to rise in connection with the point raised by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby. As he knows, by virtue of the Standing Order the hon. member is required to give notice, which he has done, to give the Chair an opportunity to study the matter extensively, which I have done during the lunch hour. I thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to do so.

The hon. member claims that the alleged failure of a Minister of the Crown to take certain steps which he had indicated would be taken in certain circumstances is in itself a violation of Parliamentary privilege. Let me refer the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby and other hon. members, as I have done in the past, to Citation 113 of Beauchesne's fourth edition, which reads as follows:

Members often raise so-called "questions of privilege" on matters which should be dealt with as personal explanations or corrections, either in the debates or the proceedings of the House. A question of privilege ought rarely to come up in Parliament.

Do the circumstances outlined by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby give rise to a valid question of privilege? I do not think so. The circumstances alleged by the hon. member may give rise to a grievance, and grievances should normally be raised and discussed by hon. members on one of the many occasions available under our supply proceedings.

What I am suggesting to the hon. member is that although he may have a complaint and may feel that the minister has not fulfilled a promise or undertaking given to the House during the course of an answer to a question, this in itself does not, in my respectful submission, constitute a question of privilege. It is the type of grievance which should normally be taken up under other circumstances, particularly when the House is debating matters under the terms of our supply proceedings.

Neither the special privileges of the hon. member as a member of the House nor the collective privileges of the House are, to my way of thinking, at issue in this instance. I must rule, therefore, that I cannot at this time put to the House the motion proposed by the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM FINANCIAL CO-OPERATION WITH PROVINCES RESPECTING PROGRAMS

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I should like to inform the House that this morning the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Basford) and myself have had the privilege of meeting with provincial ministers in the Ministerial Committee on Official Languages of the Constitutional Conference. During that meeting I announced to the provinces the federal government's proposals for financial co-operation in respect of bilingualism programs based on the principles set forth in Book II of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.