

*Routine Proceedings***POINTS OF ORDER**

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for the record I would like to correct a factual error that was made by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in answer to my question.

The Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member might consider another avenue. Question Period is over. I sense that this would probably be getting us into a debate.

If the hon. member wants to correct something that the hon. member said I would accept that but to correct another member would be out of order.

Mr. Mayfield: Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that I was not a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration at the time the decision was made to have a group of writers write a new oath.

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PRIVILEGE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

The Speaker: My colleagues, I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing on February 6, 1995 concerning media disclosure of the report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development prior to the report's presentation to the House.

[Translation]

I thank the hon. member for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. The hon. member submits that the privileges of the members of the House of Commons have been breached because this report was given to the media before being tabled in the House.

[English]

The hon. member pointed out that until they are presented in the House committee reports should remain confidential. On this he is absolutely correct. However, as all members are aware, the Speaker is loath to intervene in committee matters unless difficulties arising in committee are brought to the attention of the House by way of a report from the committee. This tradition has been outlined by many Speakers before me and in particular by Speaker Fraser on November 7, 1991 in a ruling on a question of privilege involving committee proceedings.

[Translation]

In circumstances similar to those currently before us, a standing committee might decide to examine the matter of a breach of confidentiality and decide to report it to the House. Only then can the Speaker intervene.

Although I do not find a prima facie question of privilege in this situation, the premature release of a committee's confidential information is nonetheless a very serious matter.

[English]

In his submission the hon. member further noted that as an associate member of the committee in question he was denied access to the report.

Let me remind the House that the role of associate members, as outlined in Standing Order 104(4), is basically two-fold. They can be designated by a standing committee for membership on a subcommittee it establishes and, as such, become full members of that subcommittee and enjoy all the rights of a permanent member.

• (1505)

They can also serve as substitutes in the committee for which they have been named as associate members, thereby having the same rights as those of the permanent members they are replacing.

However, in the case now before the House these situations did not occur. Furthermore, according to citation 766 in *Beauchesne's* sixth edition, non-members of a committee normally retire when the committee is about to deliberate upon its report.

Therefore, in this case the fact that the hon. member was not given access to the draft report does not, in the view of the Chair, constitute a breach of his privileges.

Finally, the issue of confidentiality is one of great importance for the House. I would remind all members of their obligation to see to it that the confidentiality of committee deliberations and reports is respected.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to two petitions.

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GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a document that outlines the expenditure management system of the Government of Canada.