

*Privilege*

Perhaps the Standing Order should be amended, corrected or changed in such a way that the discussion we have at the time of adjournment would be more relevant, but the Standing Order is there for the Chair to enforce. I have no authority, of course, to change it on my own initiative.

From time to time I have suggested that the procedures of the House and our Standing Orders might be looked into by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization. This may very well be a Standing Order that should be considered by the members of this committee. I understand that the committee will be sitting in the near future. If it might be of assistance to hon. members I would certainly be pleased to mention to the House Leaders of the different parties the suggestion of the hon. member and invite them, if they think it could be of assistance, to consider the point raised at this time by the hon. member for Red Deer.

I think I should also bring to the attention of the hon. member who raised this question the provisions of Citation 181(3) of Beauchesne. I am sure it is well known to the hon. member. It states:

A Minister may decline to answer a question without stating the reason for his refusal, and insistence on an answer is out of order, no debate being allowed. A refusal to answer cannot be raised as a question of privilege, nor is it regular to comment upon such refusal.

I refer to this citation to point out the fact that this cannot be raised as a question of privilege. In any event, I have received notice but no motion has been proposed to follow up the point raised by the hon. member. In these circumstances I think it would not be in order to have a discussion at this time on the point raised by the hon. member for Red Deer.

**Mr. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, may I make one clarifying statement on a question of privilege?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. If the hon. member has a further question of privilege I will allow him to put it. He should realize that if he is allowed to go into the matter further we might well get into a debate on the matter, and I suggest to him there should be no debate. If the hon. member has a question of privilege, then according to the procedures of the House I have to recognize him.

[Mr. Speaker.]

**Mr. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is not designed to precipitate a debate but rather to make a clarifying statement. I was not only appealing to Your Honour in respect of my question of privilege regarding the interpretation of the Standing Order to which you have referred in reference to Parliamentary Secretaries and ministers but also in respect of the fact that a prepared statement was read without my question having been taken into consideration. It could not have been considered because it had not been heard. It is this transgression and erosion of the rights of myself and other Members of Parliament that doubly concerns me.

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps I should not again comment on the hon. member's further point. As he knows, it happens from time to time that not only are answers prepared a few minutes before they are delivered but questions are prepared a few minutes before they are asked in the House. It would be difficult for the Chair to determine whether the questions or the answers are spontaneous or the product of previous reflection. In any event, I appreciate the point raised by the hon. member. It is one of importance. To give effect to the suggestion of the hon. member I will consider it my duty to bring this point to the attention of the committee.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I did not quite hear part of Your Honour's remarks. Do I understand that Your Honour would entertain discussion on the ruling—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It is the last thing in the world I would entertain at this time.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

#### TABLING OF CLOSING STATEMENT OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PRICE STABILITY

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to table in both official languages copies of the closing statement of the national conference on price stability and to express my congratulations to the Prices and Incomes Commission for its participation in this conference.