

Privilege—Miss Bégin

resources. Considering that Mr. Hopper made the claim, unchallenged, that hundreds of millions of dollars could be saved if these resources were developed on a non-profit basis by this public agency, and considering there are likely to be four tar sands projects in which case the cumulative savings could run into billions of dollars, will the government assure the House that before proceeding to dispense the kind of hand-outs it is proposing to give to the multinationals, it will consult directly with Mr. Hopper concerning his plan to save the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): There are two or three issues which the hon. gentleman is trying to raise in his question: at least, I think there are. On the most important aspect, whether the government will give consideration to the testimony of Mr. Hopper, let me say that of course the government will give consideration to the testimony of Mr. Hopper. That was the answer to the first question the hon. member put.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MISS BÉGIN—INQUIRY AS TO DELAY IN TABLING LAZAR
REPORT ON PENSIONS

Hon. Monique Bégin (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I gave you notice. Last October 22, in answer to a question, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Crombie) stated that the Lazar report on pensions would soon be tabled—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Saint-Léonard-Anjou has the floor.

Miss Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 24, two days after that question, by virtue of a motion presented under the provisions of Standing Order 43 and carried unanimously by the House, the government was required—

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I wonder if hon. members realize how difficult they are making it for the minister to hear the point which is being raised.

Miss Bégin: And for the member concerned to raise it.

[Translation]

Further to a motion presented on October 24 under the provisions of Standing Order 43 and passed unanimously, the government was ordered to table immediately the Lazar report on pensions. Several questions have been put since then. We know the report was sent for translation by the former government at the end of March. In other words, the new Conservative government has now had that report for six months. My question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, is one which, I believe, concerns the rights of all hon. members and may perhaps even jeopardize the integrity of the government. I should therefore

[Mr. Broadbent.]

like to advise you of what I have heard said, namely that the government is in the process of editing the report and screening an important part of the document from the public, more specifically the part that deals with pensions, the recommendations on what is needed to bring private pensions up to date. In any event, the government has been ordered to table the report. A month and three days have now elapsed since the House passed a motion under Standing Order 43 to that effect. If, as I do, you consider that this constitutes a breach of the respect in which this House must be held and of the right of all hon. members to information, I reserve the right to table the appropriate motion in due course.

[English]

Hon. David Crombie (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member. In an endeavour to be helpful, let me say two things; first, that when the motion under Standing Order 43 was passed by this House the report itself was already out of my hands. I had assumed the matter had been proceeding in its normal fashion. I can only assume there must be some mechanical cause for delay. I will undertake to investigate the matter and report to the hon. member and to the Speaker tomorrow.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Pinard (Drummond): In light of the explanation of the minister, and the fact that the matter brought up by the hon. member for Saint-Léonard-Anjou (Miss Bégin) seems indeed to be justified, I wonder if the House leader could promise, on behalf of the government, because we are dealing here with a resolution passed unanimously by the House of Commons, to consult his colleague, the minister, and table the report involved without further delay since the House ordered the government to do so several days ago and no one has yet taken upon himself to table it. Mr. Speaker, in view of the circumstances, it is up to the House leader to act and see to it that whatever resolutions are passed unanimously are acted upon.

[English]

Hon. Walter Baker (President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue): The hon. gentleman's point is well taken. As I understand the exchange, particularly the comment by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Crombie), if there has been any delay it is only a mechanical delay rather than an attempt not to produce the report. I undertake to look into the question of the mechanical delay and perhaps I might speak with the hon. member.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, it happens that the motion under Standing Order 43 which was passed on October 24 was in my name. I would remind the government House leader that on at least two occasions I asked him when that report would be brought down and he said, "Soon". When is "Soon"?