

● (1512)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Speaker: I have received three notices with respect to questions of privilege, but I am conscious of the fact that we are in the process of debating a question of privilege at the present time, and I really do not see any way in which I can interrupt one question of privilege to take into account another.

Yesterday, although there was some doubt about the status of the matter we were debating, I indicated that my disposition was to consider the matter as a motion and that it ought to remain as a motion, and that therefore, when we reached routine proceedings today, we would resume debate on that matter. I cannot see how other matters can be dealt with until we get to that point. However, there are items under routine proceedings, called normally every day, which bring us to the consideration of motions, and we ought to go through those steps.

There is a difficulty about the reporting of the decision I made yesterday, with regard to which I shall have something to say to the House a little later. For the moment, I would call those items under routine proceedings which will take us into further discussion of the motion in the name of the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence).

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

POST OFFICE

TABLING OF LETTER FROM MR. PORTER

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, as regards the question put by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), I mentioned that I was going to table a letter to complete his information, considering that without this additional information the question might raise confusion or be subject to a wrong interpretation.

That is why I will be pleased, Mr. Speaker, to table Mr. Porter's letter which clearly defines his position as regards the Post Office.

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INTERNATIONAL TAX AGREEMENTS

MEASURE TO IMPLEMENT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance) moved that Bill S-7, to implement conventions between Canada and the Republic of Korea and Canada and the United Kingdom of

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Great Britain and Northern Ireland and an agreement between Canada and Jamaica for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to income tax, be read the first time.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

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[English]

THE PRESS

GROSSLY AND FUNDAMENTALLY INACCURATE REPORTING OF MR. SPEAKER'S DECISION ALLEGED

Mr. McGrath: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have indicated I would not interrupt the continuation of the debate on the matter raised by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) by any procedural matter, neither questions of privilege nor points of order which arose during the question period, nor indeed, by reference to any of those three matters of which I have received notice. There is one question of privilege before the House and I think I ought to give it priority over other proceedings of the House at this time.

Having placed the subject on the order paper, under motions, the House should return to the consideration of the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham which we were in the process of dealing with yesterday at six o'clock. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) had the floor at six o'clock and a few minutes were left to him in which to continue the discussion. That will be the situation when I conclude the remarks I want to address to the House in a moment.

The House will know that the subject which was under discussion yesterday, the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, had one or two rather special features attached to it. I was at great pains to mention one of them, both on November 9 and yesterday: it was a departure from some of our practices in the past where, in circumstances of this sort, attacks had been made directly upon a minister or the government with respect to a communication of this sort.

I do not think it was my function, in reaching a decision, to indicate that in some way, in the course of debate on this question, the government was immune from attack. I certainly did not do that. Neither did I say, nor was I invited to say, by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham or by others who participated in the discussion, that the hon. member was misled by the government of the day or that he was deliberately misled by the government of the day. As a matter of fact, one of the points that I made was that we were not, as had sometimes been done in the past, holding the minister accountable in this process but that we were going around the minister to deal with this official.

In the contributions which were made to the debate from both sides of the House there were several arguments and submissions that the action complained of was one whereby