

Form of Committee Reports

• (1410)

The Standing Orders do provide ways and means by which hon. members can seek information by verbal or written questions, or by requiring the production of papers or documents. With all respect to the hon. member, I suggest that is the method or the procedure he should attempt to follow in accordance with the Standing Orders.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Second and third reports of Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development—Mr. Buchanan.

[*Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to seek the floor a second time but I do so only for a few minutes as I think this might be the appropriate moment to refer to certain procedural difficulties arising from the report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices which was presented to the House on Monday of this week.

Hon. members will have observed that there stands in the name of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway a motion to concur in this report, and presumably this motion could come forward for debate as early as tomorrow.

I draw the attention of hon. members in particular to recommendation No. 6 of the report, which is to be found at page 234 of *Votes and Proceedings* for Monday, April 2. It states:

That the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs make specific moneys available to consumer groups to present briefs to various governmental boards, where appropriate.

It may be that there is available to the department funds to cover the recommendation I have alluded to, so perhaps the objection is not substantial or serious, but I feel that a direct recommendation of this nature appears to be a departure from the procedure and practices of the House. I would draw to the attention of hon. members, without reading it, citation 260(1) of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition.

Hon. members will have observed also that the chairman of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development has, a moment ago, tabled two reports of the committee, and it is possible that the House may be faced again with a motion to concur in these reports in the immediate future. I particularly draw the attention of hon. members to the recommendation dealing with the allocation of federal funds for the settlement of certain claims. Here again, the recommendation is a departure from the well established form which is to the effect that the government is required to give consideration to the advisability of a certain recommendation proposed by a committee. As hon. members will appreciate, this question really goes to the root of our whole system, and in my view the House should not embark lightly on a new procedural course which would appear to be at odds with the Standing Orders and, as I have said, with the long established practice of the House.

[Mr. Speaker.]

I make these observations at this point merely as a caution in order that members may consider the difficulty. I make no ruling. It may well be that hon. members can easily satisfy the Chair that in at least one instance there is no particular difficulty. Perhaps the Chair does not interpret correctly the word "recommend", and that a recommendation of a committee is not in itself binding on the government. But I do feel this is a matter of some importance which should concern all hon. members and which perhaps should be looked into further in due course, not necessarily today.

As I said, I am making these remarks at this time only so that hon. members may give some thought to the possibility that a point of order could be raised when concurrence in these reports is moved in the House later.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the point of order which in effect has been raised by the Chair. I realize one is not supposed to question the Chair from the floor, but I wonder if I might pose this issue? Is the comment from the Chair a comment on the validity of the report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices, or does it involve the procedural acceptability of the motion for concurrence in that report?

Mr. Speaker: As the hon. member says, the Chair should not be involved in a debate on procedural points. I think I have made the point sufficiently clear. I have raised it not as a formal issue but as a caution. I thought hon. members would want to give some advance consideration to the point I have raised for the guidance of hon. members. In any event, at the point when the motion for concurrence is proposed the Chair might be prepared to entertain the advice of hon. members on this matter, not in respect of the whole report but rather in respect of the particular recommendation contained in these reports.

Mr. Baldwin: I take it that what Your Honour is doing is filing a caveat which might have to be considered at the time a motion might be made which if passed, might place the House in the position of accepting the report. The practice of filing caveats is one this party takes so often, Mr. Speaker, in respect of government measures.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is correct, of course, in his interpretation of what I tried to say.

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[Translation]

MANPOWER**PROPER USE OF FUNDS PROVIDED FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION**

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43, I ask the unanimous consent of the House to introduce a motion on a subject which is of urgent necessity, concerning the Local Initiatives and Opportunities for Youth Programs.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin):

That this House do appoint immediately a special committee made up of representatives of all parties to examine the possibility of entrusting the provinces and municipalities with the Local