

National Defence Act Amendment

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Chairman, I show respect to the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot, though I admit there are times when it does test one's patience.

Mr. Ricard: This is nothing but hypocrisy.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Chairman, it is quite improper for the hon. member to charge me with that. If he will read the rules he will see that what I say is the case. If the hon. member were a different type of member I would ask him to withdraw that charge—

Mr. Ricard: Don't worry about me.

Mr. McIlraith: —but since he does not have that kind of nature and background I will not make that request of him.

Mr. Ricard: This is sheer hypocrisy.

Mr. McIlraith: With all respect, Mr. Chairman, I want to raise a point of order, and I started a moment ago to do so. What is before the committee is the clause by clause consideration of this bill. We are now discussing clause 2. The hon. member who has the floor is seeking to debate one of the standing orders of the house. With great deference, that standing order is not before the committee of the whole house at the moment, and therefore his remarks are out of order.

I think the hon. member, who has a good appreciation of the rules, will agree on reflection that the rule in committee of the whole house is that hon. members should stick to the clause of the bill under discussion. Admittedly clause 2 is quite wide in scope and gives the hon. member latitude to debate the question of the armed forces; but it is not—

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Would the minister on reflection agree that he ought to have raised this point earlier?

Mr. McIlraith: I was not in the house at the time. As soon as I came in—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McIlraith: I am sure hon. members noticed when I came into the house.

Mr. Nugent: Would the minister accept a question?

Mr. McIlraith: I will in a moment. Had this rule been debated earlier in my presence I would have raised this point of order. It was not debated in my presence, I am sorry to say.

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Chairman, since the minister says that he was not in the house and the entire speech of the hon. member for Medicine Hat was devoted to this particular rule, and in view of the fact that the hon. member for Royal was only going to take a few minutes to answer the hon. member, does the minister not think that he should withdraw his point of order so that, in fairness, a short answer might be made to the lengthy and completely hypocritical tirade of the hon. member for Medicine Hat?

• (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. McIlraith: No, I would not agree to any such proposition. When I came into the house a moment or two before the hon. member for Medicine Hat had concluded his remarks, he was taking the official opposition to task for their conduct during the last number of days—for repetitious debate. That is what he was discussing.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): That has nothing to do with clause 2.

Mr. McIlraith: In any event, I have raised the point of order and I respectfully ask your ruling on it, Mr. Chairman.

The Deputy Chairman: I must say that the Chair allowed a certain latitude when hearing the hon. member for Medicine Hat on the subject, and maybe we could hear the opinions of the hon. member for Royal on the subject raised by the hon. member for Medicine Hat. However, I would ask that, having heard the hon. member for Royal, hon. members of the committee should confine their comments to clause 2.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. McIlraith: There is one difficulty. It is only fair, and indeed it is my obligation to point out, that the business committee of the house for which provision is made in rule 15A has not yet reported; it is still active, and until it reports its work becomes impossible if the proceedings under the standing order are to be debated in the interval.

Mr. Olson: On a point of order: Two or three members of the committee have stated that it was I who raised the matter of standing order 15A. I should like to point out that it was the hon. member for Oxford who raised this question and tried to decry the provisions of that order. This prompted me to make my comments.