

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 7, 1970

The House met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. COMEAU—EMPLOYMENT OF MEMBER FOR HALTON-WENTWORTH BY NEWFOUNDLAND DEPARTMENT

Mr. Speaker: On Monday, October 5, the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau) raised a question of privilege in which he suggested there could be a conflict of interest in the conduct of the hon. member for Halton-Wentworth (Mr. Morison) in his capacity as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Regional Development.

The hon. member for South Western Nova stated that the hon. member for Halton-Wentworth, while Chairman of the Standing Committee on Regional Development, was employed by the Department of Community and Social Development of the province of Newfoundland. The hon. member for South Western Nova went on to point out that that province signed an agreement with Ottawa and is on the verge of signing a new agreement affecting a greater part of the province; consequently he felt that the Newfoundland plan was much more liable to receive attention than others and, to use the hon. member's words, he sensed a direct conflict of interest.

I think that the hon. member for South Western Nova will agree that his proposed question of privilege may have been raised prematurely in that the Standing Committee on Regional Development has not met for several months and will not meet again in this session. The question of electing a chairman in the coming session is a matter of future determination.

At the same time, I should remind hon. members that it has been a long and well established practice that this House should not undertake any inquiry as to the conduct of any member except when charged with a specific offence. In that regard I would draw to the attention of the House a statement made by Mr. Speaker Michener which is

recorded at page 584 of the *Journals* for June 19, 1959, as follows:

In my view, simple justice requires that no member should have to submit to investigation of his conduct by the House or a committee until he has been charged with an offence.

As matters now stand, I suggest that the question has been stated by the hon. member in general terms relating more to propriety than to misconduct. In the circumstances, the Chair must rule that there is no prima facie case of breach of privilege.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

Third report of Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada—Mr. Gibson.

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

Sixth report of Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections—Mr. Laflamme.

[*English*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Ninth report of Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development—Mr. Watson.

ELECTION EXPENSES

First report of Special Committee on Election Expenses—Mr. Jerome.

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

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

CONCURRENCE IN FOURTEENTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Charles Turner (London East) moved that the fourteenth report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, presented to the House on Monday, October 5, 1970, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.