

Certain Motions' Position on Order Paper

As I say, the validity of the report in Your Honour's eyes is another issue. But to enable even that question to be decided it seems to me the motions ought to be in a place on the order paper where (a) they are entitled to be, and where (b) they will be reached. If they are put under the order for Monday's opposition day I assert they will never be reached. My point of order is, therefore, that they should be placed under Routine Proceedings.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I should like to comment briefly on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I understand fully why you smiled, Mr. Speaker. I was smiling at the same time at the valiant effort of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre to demonstrate to us that we are not dealing with a report on estimates. It has to be a report on estimates. The reference from the House was on estimates, and if the report has any validity at all that validity must be founded on the fact that it is a report on estimates. If it has any standing at all it ought to stand where it is. I think it would be a splendid thing in this case if it were never reached because, for other reasons, it is obviously a breach of the rules.

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a comment on the point of order. It is true that the committee on estimates has made this report. But it is the Prime Minister who said on several occasions in the House that this vehicle could be used to discuss the matter and to interrogate the president of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation about this very serious affair. It happened to be the committee on estimates that made this report, but deserves the place on the order paper which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said it should occupy. It was the Prime Minister who directed the House as to which committee should initiate action, and I submit the motion of the hon. member from Calgary should certainly be dealt with right away.

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who preceded me referred to the substantive seriousness of the content of the motion and I should like to speak very briefly on that point before I get to the procedural issue. As has been indicated, the committee was quite properly dealing with the estimates that had been referred to it. In conjunction with that task it also touched on the important matter of social housing and the firing of Mr. Rudnicki. The committee decided that it would be inappropriate, in the context of discussing estimates, to pursue that inquiry and referred the subject back to the House so that the appropriate committee of the House, at a different time and with instructions by the House, could deal with the issue.

I point out that a clear majority of the committee, and therefore a majority of the members of the House, have said that they want the dismissal of Mr. Rudnicki and the government's social housing policy investigated, and this seemed to be the only way that this majority view could get a fair hearing. Whether Your Honour decides that my motion should be in its present place on the order paper or elsewhere, it is certainly my firm wish that you rule that, whatever the location, the motion itself is in order.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak to this motion. The problem that arose in the miscellaneous estimates committee was that only an hour and a half was devoted to the consideration of this matter. When there is an important matter like the wrongful dismissal of Rudnicki one wants to discuss it, but during that time government members, backed up by a biased chairman, would not let us deal with the situation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to interrupt the hon. member who has no right, on a point of order, to rise and accuse the chairman of a committee of bias. I think that is wrong.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what other word to use. He made it very clear when we tried to rise on points of order that he would not even listen to us. Even when we raised a point of order just before the ending of the committee itself, he would not allow us to speak to it. What else can you say? Certainly he was prejudiced, and he was backed up by his own members.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to hon. members that we might limit ourselves to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre some minutes ago. I invite hon. members to take that into account. We have already spent some time on the point of order and, although it is an important one, we certainly should not at this point revive proceedings that took place in committee. The hon. member for St. John's East a few days ago raised by way of a question of privilege certain matters which took place in committee and a ruling was made at the time. I would hope that aspect of the situation might not be revived in the present circumstances but rather that we would limit our discussion to the very important procedural point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

I am sure that the hon. member for Calgary North, with his experience in the House and elsewhere and his intimate knowledge of the rules of the House, can give very valuable guidance to the Chair on the procedural aspects of this matter.

Order, please. I am not sure whether I can assume that all that might be said for or against the point of order raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has now been said. I had thought for a while that perhaps I should reserve my decision and think about it, but in all honesty I have to tell hon. members that since the notices were given to the table yesterday by the hon. member for Calgary North and the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby I was placed in the situation where I had to give serious consideration to the whole matter.

● (1420)

The weakness I see in the point made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre when he refers to motions already on the order paper is that he does not take into account a point of order raised, I think, on June 15 or June 16, followed by a ruling which was made on June 18. At that time the Chair received the benefit of excellent advice which was given by hon. members who went at length into this matter and gave their opinions. After