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OTTAWA, THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 1966.

2.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: The question of privilege just raised by the honourable Member for London (Mr. Irvine) is substantially the same as that which was raised yesterday in the House by the honourable Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). I have since then considered the matter, as I said I would yesterday.

If I may summarize the problem, the honourable Member for Edmonton West and the honourable Member for London had asked for certain information with respect to commissions set up under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. The answer provided by the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh) in the three cases was generally to the effect that the commissions set up under the Act do not report to the government but rather to the House of Commons, and that the government does not have at its disposal the information sought.

The honourable Member for Edmonton West took the position that the individual representation commissions are emanations of the House and responsible to the House and that the only method of communication with the commissions is through the Secretary of State. The honourable Member went on to say he realized that the commissions are not responsible to the government, and in the course of his remarks suggested that the Chair take under consideration the question of the possibility of compelling the commissions to answer. I indicated, as I said, that the matter would be studied, particularly the suggestion made by the honourable Member for Edmonton West on this point.

In the first instance I should say that the responsibilities of the Speaker with respect to the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act are limited. Under section 6 (2), two members of a provincial commission other than the chairman and the Representation Commissioner are appointed by the Speaker of the