

Routine Proceedings

These petitioners feel that the Canada Post Corporation has a mandate to improve rural mail delivery in Canada and in Prince Edward Island. Considering that the profits of Canada Post were \$149 million, these petitioners humbly call upon Parliament to reinstate the six-day mail delivery service in rural Prince Edward Island.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[English]

PRIVILEGE**STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT**

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I gave you notice of my intention to rise this morning on a matter of privilege.

As you know, Sir, privilege, roughly speaking, constitutes that which infringes on the ability of a member to perform those functions for which he or she was elected.

Privilege also can be breached when there are threats of intimidation or attempts at bribery towards a member in order to solicit a certain vote or action.

Beauchesne's fifth edition, article 67 states:

It is generally accepted that any threat to a Member, attempting to influence his vote or his actions as a Member, is a breach of privilege.

I wish to raise the events of this morning, Mr. Speaker, and ask the Chair to consider whether or not those two elements of privilege are contained in those events.

This morning a duly called meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport, which was called seven days ago under Issue No. 50, Meeting No. 66, 111090 at 4 p.m. At this meeting this morning not one government member attended. The meeting was called pursuant to Standing Order 106(3). The notice states as follows:

Consideration of a request made pursuant with Standing Order 106(3) to review the sale of lands to the Hamilton Harbour Commission and resuming consideration of a request made pursuant to Standing Order 106(3) to review the sale of CN Route Canada by Canadian National Railways to Transport Route Canada Inc. and the several other incorporated companies either involved in the sale or amalgamated as a result of the sale.

That was circulated by the clerk of the committee.

● (1120)

The steering committee of the Transport Committee met under the chairmanship of the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants, with government members and opposition members in attendance, and agreed that a meeting would be held this Thursday.

Since that time the chair of the committee, the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants has tendered his resignation, both as chair and as a member of that committee. That is an important element, but not the significant one in this matter.

How can I and other members perform our tasks on the committee if the committee cannot meet? How can we represent the interests of our constituents and other Canadians in matters such as CN Route, Hamilton Harbour, et cetera? Has Standing Order 106(2) been thwarted by the action of the government members?

You, Sir, have maintained consistently that you have no authority over the internal workings of committees. I would maintain, however, that this morning's events had nothing to do with the decision of the committee, or process in committee, or the adherence to rules in a committee. The committee never had an opportunity to decide or have a process or enforce any operating rules.

It was the action of individual members. Perhaps it was a collective decision of the government members of the committee, perhaps a decision of their Whip, but it was their decision to boycott the committee. That is infringing upon my ability and the ability of others to function as members of that particular committee. I repeat, I am not asking the Chair to consider the actions of a committee, I am asking the Chair to reflect on the actions of individuals outside a committee meeting.

I cannot and will not reflect on the motivations of those members. But I will say that it has been brought to my attention that this may have been done as a method of encouraging me to agree to the 49th report of the striking committee. It has been suggested to me that, since I am the chief Whip of the New Democratic caucus, and since I am charged in that capacity with