

information. That is what we want to change or not change. Very well, let the minister be absent; but let the acting minister or his parliamentary secretary answer the questions of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, to my mind, the government, which feels that it holds the majority is not acting according to usage. A while ago, the Solicitor General (Mr. McIlraith) said: Let us have a vote of confidence. A majority government can exist for three years but we have no guarantee that the situation will be the same in three years. Furthermore, that pretext must not be used to reply arrogantly to the opposition, for we are the representatives of the people. As members of the opposition, we have the right to put questions to the ministers—whether they are in the house or not—but the questions of the opposition should be answered.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I thank hon. members for their assistance in connection with the motion proposed by the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond. I may say it would have been easier for me to have reached a decision nearly an hour ago, but having heard the sound arguments presented by hon. members both in favour of the motion and in opposition to it I am wondering whether it would not be wise for me to give the matter some additional thought and postpone a decision.

I may say that the provisions of citation 104 of Beaudesne, paragraph 5, occurred to me immediately. I read as follows:

As a motion taken at the time for matters of privilege is thereby given precedence over the prearranged program of public business, the Speaker requires to be satisfied, both that there is a prima facie case that a breach of privilege has been committed, and also that the matter is being raised at the earliest opportunity.

The question of raising the matter at the first opportunity is defined further in subparagraph 3 of the same citation. The allusion there is to a matter which occurred during a recess; it was refused precedence because it was not raised on the first day of the session. If hon. members study the precedents they will find that Speakers have always enforced this aspect of a motion on a question of privilege rather stringently, and I am somewhat concerned about this procedural aspect in determining whether this motion should be allowed.

Another difficulty I find arises in connection with the motion itself. The motion moved by the hon. member is an essential part of the

### Atomic Energy

question of privilege, and I have the impression that perhaps the wording as submitted to the house, inasmuch as the hon. member and those who supported him have suggested that this matter be referred to the special committee on procedure, makes it a substantive motion and therefore subject to the limitations of standing order 41. This is another difficulty with which I am faced.

In any event, if hon. members will allow me I will take the matter under advisement, seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and render a decision.

• (3:30 p.m.)

### ATOMIC ENERGY

#### CO-OPERATION BETWEEN FRENCH AND CANADIAN AGENCIES RESPECTING NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, hon. members are aware of the close and cordial association that has existed for many years between the national atomic energy agencies of France and of Canada, the Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique, and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. I am pleased to inform the house that this association has now moved a further step forward with the conclusion by the C.E.A. and A.E.C.L. of an agreement to extend the co-operation between them in research and development and in information exchanges relating to water cooled, heavy water moderated nuclear power reactors.

The agreement provides for the exchange of existing technical information in this field and that which will be obtained during the next five years from A.E.C.L. and C.E.A. programs. The parties will also assist each other in the development of nuclear power reactor systems of this type. The exchange does not include full design details of specific nuclear power stations such as the Douglas Point, Pickering and Gentilly nuclear power stations in Canada and the EL-4 power station in France.

The agreement includes the exchange of information of commercial value and, as a consequence, provides a payment by the C.E.A. to A.E.C.L. to balance the agreed difference in value of the initial exchange of technology.

Co-operation between A.E.C.L. and the C.E.A. dates from the second world war, when French, British and Canadian scientists worked together in Canada to launch what evolved into the Canadian atomic energy program. The first heavy water for the early