

Privilege—Mr. Axworthy

as any other person. I want to make that clear because the matter was raised in the context of this discussion. The two matters are not similar at all.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker: The President of the Privy Council agrees and this is what I concluded from his comments and from those I heard on the other side of the House. If he wishes to introduce a motion with the unanimous consent of the House, I would receive it now. Otherwise, I will take the whole matter under advisement and decide later whether or not there is a basis for a question of privilege.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, if you would allow me, I could ask the minister who has raised the question of privilege to present a motion referring the case to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. And, of course, there is no question of a short-term resignation as suggested by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark). It is only a matter of referring the case to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for consideration. If you have no objection, the motion could be moved by the minister who raised the question of privilege and I presume that my colleagues will have nothing against that.

[*English*]

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, before moving the motion, I should perhaps make a clarification of the statement made by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). The events to which I allude took place prior to the time I was a minister. It is not a question of conflict of interest, but a question of standing in the House, which is comparable to the position which the hon. member for Yukon was in previously.

This is a matter which took place prior to my having been sworn in as a minister. It was terminated prior to that time. Therefore it is not a question of conflict of interest, it is a question of standing in the House comparable to the precedent cited by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard). As a result, that is why I am referring the matter to the standing committee.

I would therefore move, seconded by the President of the Privy Council:

That the subject matter of my question of privilege be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the minister to move his motion?

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I am by no means rising to suggest that the course the minister has indicted is an inappropriate course. I am a bit worried about the words "subject matter" as they appear in the motion. We will want to make sure the motion is reasonably precise so that it can be dealt with.

I had experience with this some time ago. There was a meeting of the House leaders of the parties whereby we may

get some precision in the language so that it indicates what the House really has to deal with. There seems to be some imprecision. I know it is not intended, but I am sure the minister would want the matter cleared up. It is in that sense that I rise.

I wonder, Madam Speaker, if you would consider a meeting of some kind so that we may just review the words to ensure that what is indicated by members of the House of Commons in fact happens as a result of the wording of the motion. That is my only reason for rising. If you think it improper that I should rise on this occasion, I will have to go along with what is being presented to the House; but I wonder if we could just defer that matter until we have a chance to talk about it.

• (1550)

Mr. Axworthy: If I may speak to that point, Madam Speaker, I should like to say to the House leader for the opposition that the wording was drafted exactly from wording used in a previous motion in this House in 1968, so the precedent is there. We have checked it out carefully and it is wording which was applied in 1968 in a similar matter.

Motion agreed to.

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[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, concerning the business of the House, I simply want to advise hon. members on both sides of the House that, following the vote tonight on the NPD amendment introduced by the hon. member for Kootenay West, the throne speech debate will be interrupted to be continued at a later date during this session.

[*English*]

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, it might be appropriate at this time if the government House leader could detail for us the order of business which will be followed. We have had some discussions on this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I should like to repeat publicly what I said privately to my hon. colleague, namely that tomorrow afternoon we shall deal with Bill C-2. Other bills are to be introduced today, including one concerning small business loans, which we should like to consider, once Bill C-2 has been dealt with. There is another bill which must be urgently considered. It is because this legislation could not be introduced before the throne speech debate had ended that we have decided to interrupt it temporarily. It will be introduced tomorrow by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It relates to the employment tax credit, and we shall deal with it the day after tomorrow, as soon as we have completed consideration of Bill C-2 and/or the small business loans legislation.