

[Translation]

### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

#### PROCEDURE IN CONSIDERING RESOLUTION ON ORDER PAPER

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Auguste Choquette (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Public Works in his capacity as house leader and take this opportunity to state a grievance.

In view of the fact that yesterday in the debate on capital punishment we heard abolitionists, would it not be possible to come to an agreement so that the order of speakers will take into account the distribution of those in favour and those against, rather than the parties in the house?

[English]

**Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, the recognition of hon. members who wish to speak is a matter for the Chair, and I do not believe it would be proper for the house leader to interfere in that matter. I would feel very reluctant to do so.

### COAL

#### ATTENDANCE OF MINISTERS AT HALIFAX CONFERENCE

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I want to ask him if at the coming coal conference in Halifax, which is also going to cover the subject of steel, it is his intention to invite both the coal union, the steel union, and management.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. It is difficult for the Chair to judge about this question, but I am wondering whether it is asked of the minister in his capacity as Minister of National Health and Welfare.

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Well, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect maybe I can assist. These questions have been ruled out of order before, but I wish to quote the Minister of National Health and Welfare, if need be on a question of privilege, as recorded at page 2146 of *Hansard* for March 3:

It has been an accepted tradition in the past that the Nova Scotian minister involves himself very deeply in coal policy. That, of course, was characteristic of my immediate predecessors, the late Hon. George Nowlan and Hon. R. H. Winters.

#### *Inquiries of the Ministry*

That is a practice that has been going on here for the last decade, but we are being denied the right to ask these questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. If the hon. member cares to read the rules and precedents he will see it has not been recognized practice to ask questions of ministers other than in their capacities as ministers of the crown.

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Mr. Speaker, I would call attention to the fact—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** —that when this statement was made the minister wasn't called out of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member will please resume his seat.

[Later:]

**Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Pictou):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare whether he intends to attend the coal conference in Nova Scotia next week, along with the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys?

**Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise earlier on a question of privilege in connection with the question raised by the hon. member for Cape Breton South.

In so far as I am personally concerned I have no objection whatsoever to reporting to the house on any meetings or conferences that I may attend with respect to public matters in the province of Nova Scotia, but at the same time there has been a ruling by the Chair that it is improper for a minister to answer in the house for matters outside his immediate administrative responsibilities as a minister.

I simply wish to declare that I intend to abide by the ruling of the Chair, but I refuse to be placed in the false position in which I have been placed in recent days by questions that have been asked with the suggestion that there has been a fear or a refusal to answer. The reason for my not answering is that I wish to abide by the ruling made by the Chair, and so long as that ruling is maintained I do not intend to go beyond my responsibilities.

**Mr. MacEwan:** Mr. Speaker, I think this is a reasonable question. I wish to ask the minister whether he intends to attend this conference in Nova Scotia next week along with the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys.