

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 17, 1970

The House met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Thirteenth and fourteenth reports of Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, in French and in English—Mr. Clermont.

[English]

AGRICULTURE

First report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture—Mr. Beer.

[Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. FORTIN—OBJECTION TO PRESENTATION OF FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning the tabling of the report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, whose study dealt exclusively with the dairy policy.

This committee had been given its terms of reference on December 18, 1969, under a motion moved by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) which was recorded in *Hansard* on the same day.

I then expressed my opposition in no uncertain terms. Hon. members will also recall that the Minister of Agriculture had asked for unanimous consent by the House to refer the essential aspects of the question to the agriculture committee.

Here is what I said, and I quote:

We are ready to accept the motion of the Minister of Agriculture. However, there is a point which remains to be cleared up before we give our approval, and that is whether the report on the study on the dairy industry made by the committee on agriculture during May and June last will be tabled in the House and whether it has anything to do with the minister's motion.

Mr. Speaker, I then stated my position unequivocally, as follows:

If it is two different matters, we cannot give our approval—

The unanimous consent of the House was then sought.

—but if, on the other hand, it is a report on that study, we will gladly give our consent.

That was my position. Mr. Speaker, I contend that the first report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture cannot be tabled in the House as long as the committee has not satisfied the *sine qua non* condition I had set namely, that it state its position with regard to the report on the special study made on the same matter in May and June last in Eastern Canada and which was rather costly. Mr. Speaker, this is actually the truth, and you will understand why there has been a breach of our privileges.

The special study conducted by the Committee on Agriculture during a special trip of committee members, has never been reported to the House. Why? Because, the findings of that study are at variance with the dairy policy of this government. This is also why the government members who sat on that committee have never made any effort to urge the Committee on Agriculture to submit its report. Nevertheless, that trip entailed some public expenditures. Indeed, it lasted almost 15 days. The committee had been asked to consider substantially the same matter than that the one referred to it, pursuant to the motion introduced on December 18 last.

• (2:10 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I then said that if that was a related study to be conducted within the framework of this study, we would support the motion for unanimous agreement, but that, on the other hand, if those were two separate matters, we would not endorse it for the following reasons.

First of all, it was another proof that government members were trying very hard to use their majority not only to control the proceedings, but even their contents. Secondly, it meant double expenditures of public funds, which is reckless spending. Finally, had I agreed to the request for unanimous consent, the report of the journey made by the Standing Committee on Agriculture