

determine who is right and who is wrong. Thus, we are labouring at least under that procedural difficulty, and possibly others. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) may be right when he says that, even if these allegations were true, they might be a grievance and not a question of privilege.

For the moment, let us agree that we are labouring under difficulties which seem to be insurmountable in the procedural sense, and, even if it did constitute privilege, it has now been denied by the Solicitor General which, therefore, makes it a matter of dispute and not of privilege.

The difficulty for the Chair is that that procedural problem does not set aside the basic problem that rests at the core of this matter, which may now come to light, or it may not, I do not know. However, the contributions that have been made now indicate that there may be some regime in existence which may be offensive to members and which they may want to put in the form of some motion. I refer, not to the actions of the Solicitor General, but to the existence of some regime, if it is in fact an offensive one, that has been disclosed today in argument.

I am considering that those members who may want to participate would be better served in their position if the contributions to the debate today could be reflected upon. Of course I would set aside the outstanding motion on procedural grounds, because I have to do that on the basis of what I have just put forward. Then hon. members who are concerned with this problem will have the opportunity to examine the contributions that have been made and to determine if, in their opinion, there is at the core of this the existence of some regime. This in turn might form the substance of another motion which could be renewed and introduced on Monday.

However, I am perfectly prepared, in fairness, to hear all the hon. members before trying to decide on this particular question of privilege which, in any case, would be without prejudice to the introduction of another motion on the basis of these arguments. In any event, we ought to deal with this basic procedural problem, and I am in the hands of the members who I have already indicated are prepared to participate. Perhaps I could have some indication as to how we should proceed.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we basically deal with these things from a procedural ground. That is not a criticism, but merely a comment. I could give you argument as to why, when the motion was put by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), it was relevant on the day it was put from the point of view of the question period of that day. However, that is something I feel I should not engage either you, sir, or the House in at this point.

It is important that we examine the statements made today in light of what has been said by you, sir, on procedural grounds so that the matter will not be lost and we can deal with the merits of it. The merits certainly are not those put forward by my friend, the government House leader, that any

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member of parliament, least of all the member for Halifax, was trying to garner unto himself as a member a matter of special privilege that ought not to be vested in anyone else in the community. The fact of the matter is, and my friend overlooked it or skated around it, that with respect to political candidates there is a special manual.

The question that arises in my mind, and I am sure in the minds of a lot of people, is whether there is a special manual for lawyers, bankers, priests and others. The question is just what is the procedure, and not that a security procedure exists. Having said that, sir—and if you could take your eyes from the clock for a moment—would it be appropriate, since the hon. member for Halifax is not here, if we did stand this matter over until Monday so that he could consider what was said? He could also consider your observations with respect to the motion, and then we could deal with the matter on Monday in a way that would be procedurally correct. With respect, that would be my suggestion to you.

Mr. Speaker: The only other step that I had in mind would be to set aside this particular motion on procedural grounds, without prejudice to the right of the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), or for that matter to any other member, to reintroduce a motion on the same subject. I do not have to take that step now, however, but I wanted to indicate my thinking on it.

● (1302)

There is a procedural difficulty with this particular motion, but there still is at the core of the matter the possibility of a regime which may be odious to members of the House of Commons and which might form the subject of another question of privilege entirely. Therefore I shall suspend further discussion on this particular motion until Monday afternoon at three o'clock, at which time there may be an indication, after study, that some other motion might be introduced or some other indication that might be helpful to the House in these deliberations. This matter is therefore suspended.

Before leaving the chamber I wonder if we might not attempt to tidy up the routine proceedings in order that we may go to orders of the day at two o'clock.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Third report of Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs—Mr. Trudel.

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