

Mr. Speaker: No, on this question of privilege. The reason is to try to put some order into the presentation of argument. I hope that helps hon. members.

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan on a point of order.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, in order to assist the Chair, I am advised that some of my colleagues who have filed notices with you are not in the Chamber at the moment. They are outside the area. I wanted to indicate that your list may not be totally complete.

Mr. Speaker: I know hon. members would want to assist the Chair in dealing with this in the most expeditious way. I understand the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier wants to rise and to argue disposition. I am going to proceed seriatim with the applications which I have in front of me on the issue in which argument has commenced. As a consequence, I turn next, and this is in chronological order, to the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I wish to add a few words to what has already been said by the spokesperson for the Liberal Party.

If you go through the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, or if you go through Beauchesne's, you will not find the appropriate precedents for what happened in the finance committee last night. We know that the chairman of the finance committee deemed that something occur. He deemed that a certain motion proposed by the member for Ontario be withdrawn and then made a ruling saying that another motion take the place of the motion that was withdrawn.

If you look at what happened, Mr. Speaker, you will find that this is very inappropriate in terms of the way this House has worked over the years. You, as the custodian of propriety and order in the House of Commons, should look at the precedents and at the proceedings of the House of Commons and at the work of a committee of the House of Commons. I do not think you will find that this is an appropriate way for a chairman to act.

At about 11.35 or 11.36 p.m. last night, the chairman did not put a new motion to the finance committee. Instead of putting a new motion, he made a ruling. What he said was that there could be no debate and no discussion of his ruling, and that there could be no point

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of order or point of privilege raised concerning his ruling.

In other words, the ruling could not be questioned at all. He said the only thing that could be done at this particular stage was to challenge the Chair. I have the minutes of that particular portion of the meeting here with me. At that time, the Chair was challenged. The chairman, the member for Mississauga South stated: "I am told by the clerk that there are no points of order, that there is no debate any further. This is the ruling of the Chair. If you would like to challenge the Chair, you may challenge the Chair". Then Mr. Harvey said: "I am not out of order and you know it". I take it he was trying to get the floor at that time. The chairman said: "It is the ruling of the Chair". Mr. Harvey said: "The Chair cannot rule that the moon is made out of green cheese and make it so". The chairman said: "Does somebody want to challenge the ruling of the Chair?" Mr. Young is quoted as saying: "Mr. Chairman, we challenge the ruling of the Chair and reserve the right to challenge it in front of the Speaker". The chairman said: "It has been moved by Mr. Young that the ruling of the chair is now being challenged. Is that challenge sustained? Are all those in favour of sustaining the Chair?" At that point the majority of people on that committee agreed to sustain the Chair.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to briefly look at the practices and the precedents in the House of Commons and you will find that what happened last night is very rare indeed.

The bizarre incident that occurred was further compounded today in the House of Commons by the government House Leader. During Question Period I asked him to confirm that the precedent that they used from last night was the ruling of the then chairman of the justice committee, Claude-André Lachance back in June, 1984 when that committee was discussing the CSIS bill.

At that time, the then chairman of the justice committee, Claude-André Lachance used a similar method, but not the same method. If you check the minutes of that justice committee, Mr. Speaker, you will find that those meetings went on for a considerable period of time. The chairman did say in his remarks that the spokespeople for the opposition parties were consulted about the proper way in which to proceed. The opposition was consulted about the ruling the chairman was about to make at that particular time. If my memory is correct, and I did not have a chance to look this up in the last few minutes, you will also find that the steering committee of