

the House. Just the same I will review the matter. However, a practice is something which lends itself to very different interpretations and the House will understand that I would be in a very bad position to give an interpretation of it in light of the Standing Orders of the House.

However, the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) recalled a precedent of the former occupant of the Chair. I believe I remember that precedent. It has to do with public funds which allegedly were spent for so-called parliamentary committees or caucus committees. He commented at length on the way we should look upon the expenditure of public funds for the establishment of parliamentary committees or caucus committees. I am not sure an analogy can be drawn between the two situations, but since the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood is usually so logical in his arguments I cannot simply dismiss the serious argument he has made before the House. Therefore I will examine this question.

As regards that part of the intervention of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) wherein he urged me to reflect upon a comment made by my predecessor, I want to say to him that the first time he spoke about that I was somewhat ill at ease because, after all, I had just made a ruling and I had the impression that under the request to reflect further upon a precedent or a ruling made by my predecessor, the hon. member was very careful but I had a vague impression that he and some of this colleagues were questioning one of the rulings I had made.

Again today he has asked me to reflect and comment. I want to tell him right away that I will refuse to comment on hypothetical situations. And if in a given circumstance my predecessor deemed appropriate to make comments rather than a ruling, personally I would hesitate to comment on situations which are not clearly put to me for a ruling to be made. Still, the comment which was made will certainly assist me in the consideration of the question of privilege which has just been raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood.

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, it is not my intention to comment on your remarks and your ruling in any adverse way. I am rising on behalf of my colleague, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker). There should be no misunderstanding in the mind of the Chair, as there is none in mine, that he was addressing himself to a specific question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae). It was specific enough; it was not a hypothetical matter.

Second, he invited the Chair to comment on the propriety of the specific question raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood, as your predecessor had occasion to comment and did in fact comment upon a similar question which was raised. There should be no misunderstanding, which perhaps the Chair might have had, about the intention of the hon. member

Supplementary Estimates

for Nepean-Carleton when he made his presentation on this specific matter.

● (1540)

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, naturally I concur with the statement made by my colleague, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I want to make it clear, Madam Speaker, that I was not asking you to reconsider a judgment which you had made just previously. I listened to the judgment. I suppose many counsel who appear before judges from time to time can be unhappy with the decisions but not disagree with them. Or, perhaps I wished the Speaker might have decided otherwise, but I recognize the rules of the House of Commons, that your word is supreme in these matters. My comment was not directed at your previous ruling. I want to make that absolutely clear.

Madam Speaker: I want to reassure the hon. member that what I was saying in French was and perhaps there was something lost in the translation while he was asking me to reflect on a commentary that is, the last time, I was a bit uneasy. I was referring to that in order to tell him now that, in general, I would not be inclined to comment on hypothetical situations. I am not referring to this one today. It is clear to me that the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton was speaking precisely about the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

ENERGY

TABLING OF LETTER TO RIGHT HON. LEADER OF THE
OPPOSITION

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I would like to table a letter that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) sent to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) following a reply he gave him during question period.

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[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C), 1980-81

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEES

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Supplementary Estimates (C) of sums required for the service of Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1981, and in accordance with the provisions of the British North America Act, 1867, was presented by Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board) and read by Madam Speaker to the House.