

*Treatment of Private Bills*

that he was not notified when the committee proceeded with the consideration of Bill C-120.

I wish I could say that as a result of the additional time I have had to consider this matter, due to the hon. member's forbearance and courtesy, the Chair has been able to conclude that he has a legitimate question of privilege. In my view, whether the committee's findings and recommendations conform or do not conform with the proposals contained in the private bill cannot constitute a question of privilege. There are no rules and no precedents to support the hon. member's contention.

The second difficulty raised by the hon. member for Cochrane to the effect that he did not receive advance notice of the consideration by the committee of the subject matter of the bill, while it may amount to a legitimate grievance, does not justify a prima facie question of privilege. All hon. members will agree, I am sure, that as a matter of courtesy an hon. member whose bill or motion is to be considered by a committee should be notified by the committee chairman, the committee clerk, or someone on their behalf. I believe that this is the normal practice. I believe that in normal circumstances, when a private bill, or more often the subject matter of a private bill, is referred for consideration by a committee, either the committee chairman or the committee clerk gets in touch with the member or the member himself takes the initiative to communicate with the officers in charge of proceedings in the committee to ensure that he will be available when the matter is considered and discussed in the committee. In any event I would like to suggest that the procedure should be reviewed so as to ensure that advance notice is always conveyed to the sponsors of private bills and resolutions which have been referred to committees so that the unfortunate incident of which the hon. member has been a victim cannot be repeated.

This having been said, I have to rule that although the hon. member would appear to have a very legitimate grievance, there is no question of privilege on which a motion could be founded and put to the House at this time.

MR. CAFIK—USE OF POST OFFICE BOX 4430

**Mr. Norman A. Cafik (Ontario):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 17 I rise on a question of privilege. Notice of this question has been given to Your Honour to fulfil the conditions of Standing Order 17(2). My ques-

[Mr. Speaker.]

tion of privilege relates to the mail addressed to, and I quote, "My Member of Parliament, P.O. Box 4430, Ottawa, Ontario."

I raise this question at the earliest opportunity because it has only come to my attention that mail intended for myself was forwarded to another Member of Parliament, and because of other details regarding this case of which I was not aware prior to now.

I believe that Members of Parliament have the right to expect free access by their constituents to themselves without going through an outside intermediary, and I maintain that the action taken by those responsible for the dissemination of information indicating an improper address for Members of Parliament is a direct violation of my privileges and the privileges of all members of this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cafik:** Mr. Speaker, as much as I laud the actions of those responsible for these advertisements in so far as they are attempting to involve more people in the democratic process and to advance the goal of participation in the Governmental Process, I feel that their ill-conceived actions have resulted in a backward step for genuine participation. It does not further the cause of participation to publish a misleading and erroneous address for all members of this House.

I further contend that no individuals or groups have the right, however lofty their motives, to place themselves as an intermediary between the public and their elected representatives, and to do so is to violate our exclusive rights as members of this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Cafik:** I further contend that no one has the right to intercept my mail and remove it from the post office for any purpose whatsoever. This is not only a violation of the Post Office Act, section 8, which gives the Postmaster General the sole and exclusive privilege of collecting, conveying and delivering letters within Canada, but it is also a violation of the privileges of this House in so far as this mail was directed to Members of Parliament. Furthermore, the Post Office Act, section 39, indicates that "mailable matter becomes the property of the person to whom it is addressed when deposited in a post office."

I further contend that the very act of establishing this post office box is a contravention of my rights as a member of this House and the Post Office Act, section 69, which makes it