

Privilege—Mr. Neil

mittee will not be amendable in a substantive manner in the House.

I should therefore like to ask the government House leader if the government intends to proceed by way of a concurrence motion in the report of the committee and thereby deny the House the opportunity it would have, in the case of a bill or of a straightforward resolution, to move amendments?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of that ruling of one of the co-chairmen of the joint committee. Furthermore, it is very difficult to reply to this question since I do not know what is in the report of the committee. Finally, I am quite willing to meet with the House leaders if they want to see me about this matter. Perhaps they can give me an answer to the suggestions that I made as early as October concerning the form of the final debate on our constitutional package.

[*English*]

Mr. Nielsen: Arising out of that response, the government House leader will recall that last November he discussed with opposition House leaders the possibility of a special procedure which would recognize that we will not be dealing with a normal committee report but with one which is legislative in its effect. Does the government House leader have under consideration a special process whereby the proposed resolution could be dealt with in an orderly fashion, with amendments proposed in an unambiguous, straightforward manner?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: As I have just told my colleague, I am quite willing to discuss these matters at a private meeting, but not on the floor of the House. I had already begun discussions with the Progressive Conservative and New Democratic Party House leaders last fall. They even received material to submit to their respective caucus. I still have not received a formal answer. However, I am willing to meet with them again to discuss the form of the final debate on the Constitution at any time this week.

[*English*]

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, after you have dealt with the question of privilege of which you have been given notice, and while I am considering that response with respect to a further point of order concerning House practices, I will simply give you notice now that I will be raising the question later this day.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. NEIL—STATEMENT MADE BY CABINET MINISTER IN SENATE

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege with respect to certain remarks made last Thursday evening by a minister of the Crown, namely, the

minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is a statement which I believe affects the rights and privileges of members of this House. I will quote his remarks in a moment, but at this time I would indicate that the minister attempted to tie in members of the Conservative party with the separatist movement in western Canada.

As all hon. members know, a feeling of separatism is or has been building in western Canada. It is based on policies put forward by the government over the past several years, such as the arbitrary imposition of the metric system, gun control legislation, the attempt to repatriate the constitution unilaterally and, of course, the energy policy. These policies have caused a feeling of frustration and deep resentment which has never before existed in my part of the country. Naturally there have arisen individuals and groups in the west who have joined together in an attempt to bring their concerns to the attention of the government and of the people of Canada.

Among these people, of course, are some who have considered the possibility of separatism. In my area there are people who have expressed their concerns their frustrations, and have indicated to me their feelings of helplessness and their fears for the future of our country. I have spoken to many in this respect, and among all I have spoken to have found only one who espoused the cause of separatism—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has already spoken for five minutes and I still do not know what the question of privilege is all about. I wish the hon. member would come to that very shortly and then present his arguments to prove there is a question of privilege. I would then be able to judge the value of the question of privilege. It has been five minutes now and I still do not know what is the question of privilege.

● (1510)

Mr. Neil: Madam Speaker, I was simply trying to give the House and the people of Canada some background of the feelings which exist in western Canada. I will come to the statement to which I am referring.

Last Thursday evening in the Senate the hon. minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, as recorded at page 1608 of the Senate *Hansard*, made certain remarks which, as I have indicated earlier, attempted to tie members of the Conservative party into the separatist movement in western Canada. He was talking first about the Crow rates. I will not go into his preliminaries, but the Senator went on to say this:

We are not going to get any support from western provincial governments or the opposition when we start down this road. All I said to the grain producers and the livestock producers, who have so much at stake, was that if they could agree among themselves on the stand the government should take in regard to a change, if any—and I am not sure there should be any change—then that would be a much more satisfactory way to proceed than to send a task force out in orbit, only to have provincial governments and the Conservative party saying, “Well, aren’t we in great shape? We have the Constitution out there and we can really raise hell about that, and we can get our separatist meetings going with prominent Conservatives.”