

Privilege—Mr. Hargrave

tion. It was eventually adopted by the National Indian Brotherhood and by the Canadian government. It is now the cornerstone of that policy of the Department of Indian Affairs.

The fact that this bill will not go to committee at this stage does not mean the whole subject will not be discussed. The Standing Committee on Indian Affairs is negotiating to have the annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs referred to it, in order that we can discuss a number of issues. Unemployment is one of those issues.

Mr. Peters: This is an emergency.

Mr. Marchand (Kamloops-Cariboo): This bill will not overcome that emergency. The subject is much wider. There are also the matters of housing, education and many others that need to be discussed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member who is speaking, but the hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. HARGRAVE—REFERENCE TO STATEMENT MADE OUTSIDE THE HOUSE BY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It deals with the fact that at 2:30 this afternoon the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) called a press conference at the National Press Club. The purpose of the conference was to announce a very important and significant new policy dealing with a program of deficiency payments for a cow slaughter plan for all of Canada. My question of privilege deals with the very obvious method the minister used to make this important announcement. Very simply, I suggest it should have been made in this House so that all members could have had an opportunity to hear it and allow for appropriate responses to be made on behalf of opposition parties.

● (1700)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hargrave: If timing were of such importance, and I concede it may have been so as to follow the closing of most of the cattle markets in Canada, the House should have reverted to motions for that purpose.

It was just by accident that I heard of the press conference, and I attended in person because of my obvious interest in any policy matter having to do with the Canadian cattle industry. The minister is well aware of this interest, and might well have drawn my attention to the fact that a press conference was being held. However, I maintain that the House of Commons is the proper place for such announcements.

If the minister had made his remarks in the House I suggest that my response might have surprised him. Without going into detail about his interim subsidy program announced this afternoon, I would point out that most of the features it contained were my own personal recommendations made in the emergency debate last October 31, to deal with the cow-calf crisis in Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order. The hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave) was good enough to let me know it was his intention to raise a question of privilege. I thought I should hear from him as to the specific nature of his grievance related to the statement made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) outside the House, but having heard from the hon. member I would refer to a ruling made by Mr. Speaker on Friday, November 1, 1974, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 957:

There are numerous precedents which indicate most clearly, that statements made outside the House of Commons do not constitute a breach of privilege... hon. members may be critical of statements made by ministers or others outside the House and they may legitimately be the subject of debate or questioning, but they do not constitute a question of privilege.

The citations are numerous, and I do not propose to take up any more of the time of the House by reading them. I therefore rule that a prima facie case of privilege does not exist.

At 5.05 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.