

Family Income Security Plan

question of privilege is that I believe the records of the House are incorrect. It is not a personal point of privilege but one that affects every member of the House.

The fact is that in tabling its report the National Harbours Board did not abide by the rules and regulations laid down by Parliament. There have been three breaches of the laws of this Parliament and an abuse of Standing Order 41(1). The following appears at page 424 of *Votes and Proceedings* for June 23 last:

The following papers having been deposited with the Clerk of the House were laid upon the Table pursuant to Standing Order 41(1), namely:

By Mr. Jamieson, a Member of the Queen's Privy Council,—Financial Statements of the National Harbours Board, for the year ended December 31, 1971, pursuant to section 32 of the National Harbours Board Act, chapter N-8, R.S.C. 1970—

Section 32 of the National Harbours Act provides:

The Board shall, as soon as possible but within three months after the termination of each calendar year, submit an annual report to the Minister in such form as he may prescribe—

In passing, I point out that the report was tabled six months, instead of three months, after the termination of the calendar year 1971. I also bring to Your Honour's attention that section 34 of the National Harbours Board Act provides:

The accounts and financial transactions of the Board shall be audited by the Auditor General of Canada.

The fact of the matter is that the report was tabled with a financial statement that was not audited or certified by the Auditor General of Canada, in violation of section 34 of the National Harbours Board Act. In addition to that, although it is not laid down by statute, it is a matter of courtesy for the board or any other government commission to table sufficient copies to enable all Members of Parliament to receive one. In this case, only one copy was tabled and, as I say, it was not audited by the Auditor General.

It appears to me that these very serious omissions on the part of the National Harbours Board must not be allowed to go unnoticed, not by me or by any member of the House. Certain rules and regulations are laid down and must be followed, and I submit they have not been followed. I therefore suggest that the House should not accept a report that does not meet the criteria laid down by Parliament.

I hope Your Honour will not rule I am raising a grievance because this is a matter of parliamentary procedure that affects all members, but if Your Honour feels I have made out a bona fide case, I shall move, seconded by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath):

That this House orders the Clerk of the House to expunge from *Votes and Proceedings*, No. 80, for Friday, the 23rd June 1972, under the heading, "Returns and Reports Deposited with the Clerk of the House", the following entry:

"By Mr. Jamieson, a Member of the Queen's Privy Council,—Financial statement of the National Harbours Board, for the year ended December 31, 1971, pursuant to section 32 of the National Harbours Board Act, chapter N-8, R.S.C. 1970 (English and French).—Sessional Paper No. 284-1/154".

and that the Clerk do return the Paper, improperly titled "Sessional Paper No. 284-1/154" to Mr. Jamieson, a member of the Queen's Privy Council.

I hope—

[Mr. Hales.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair is prepared to indicate whether it feels that a prima facie case of privilege has been made. I really do not think that we should allow a debate on the matter. The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) seems anxious to rise, but I do not think he should be allowed to rise unless the Chair rules that there is a prima facie case of privilege. Otherwise, as hon. members know, there is no reason why we should not have a full debate on the matter, and I do not think there should be a debate unless it is felt that there is a prima facie case of privilege established.

Certainly, I cannot make such a finding. The hon. member has given notice of his intention to raise this matter this afternoon by way of a question of privilege. I have had the opportunity to give the matter some thought in the meantime, and I have certainly given full attention to the submissions he has made for the consideration of the Chair. It seems to me that the hon. member has two grievances, the first in relation to what he considers to be an illegal procedure concerning the tabling of this report, and the second in relation to the distribution of the report. He says that only one copy has been tabled, whereas it is the general practice to table more copies for distribution to hon. members who want to see the report. I fail to see how this can be considered a breach of the privileges of the House.

The motion suggested by the hon. member is, in my view, a substantive motion. It is not a privileged motion but a submission that substantive action be taken by the House in relation to certain facts to which he has alluded. That, to my way of thinking, is a substantive motion which would have to be moved in the usual way, with the required notice given as provided by the Standing Orders.

While the hon. member may have a grievance in so far as the distribution of the document in question is concerned, if the Chair could be of assistance in this respect there is no doubt that I would be prepared, with the assistance of the Clerk and the gentlemen at the table, to satisfy this requirement for the hon. member. Otherwise I do not think the matter should be debated in the House by way of a question of privilege.

• (1410)

[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Fourth report of Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs—Mr. Guay (St. Boniface) (for Mr. Foster).

[English]

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I should like to assure the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales) that all the necessary requirements have been met before presenting this report.

Some hon. Members: Order, order.

[Editor's Note: For text of above report see today's *Votes and Proceedings*.]