

Privilege

pass regulations which conflict with what the federal Government is doing at the present time. This will negate the federal Government's responsibility.

Why is the federal Government once again abandoning its responsibility in this country, and giving these powers to the provinces?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I know that my hon. friend is opposed to the free trade agreement, and is trying to tie every possible objection that he can into it. But I ask him to go back and examine the words of Premier Ghiz of Prince Edward Island, at the First Ministers' Conference, when he acknowledged that one of the first actions taken by this new Government of Canada was action to reduce energy costs on Prince Edward Island. He expressed the gratitude of his Government for that.

Second, my hon. friend asks me about electricity prices and hydro prices in Prince Edward Island. They get their hydro from New Brunswick Power, which is why Premier Bourassa sold it to New Brunswick at a lower cost, in order that Prince Edward Island could benefit from this type of preferential treatment.

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise Hon. Members that the time for oral questions has expired.

I have two rulings to give.

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PRIVILEGE

DISPOSITION OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS—MR. SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: On Wednesday November 25, 1987, the Hon. Member for Broadview Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) raised in the House the manner in which her Private Member's Bill C-204 is being dealt with in the legislative committee appointed to study the Bill.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) claimed that the Committee's proceedings were being systematically obstructed by Government Members sitting on the Committee and by the Committee's Chairman or Acting Chairman. She said that Government Members did not look favourably on the Bill and that the actions of the Acting Chairman on Thursday, November 24, 1987, reflected his prejudice against the Bill before the Committee.

[*English*]

I wish to thank the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) and the Hon. Member for Mission—Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain) for their contribution to this important matter. The Hon. Member for Sarnia—Lambton (Mr. James) must

also be mentioned, and I thank him for his helpful intervention.

I wish to remind all Hon. Members of my ruling of November 18, 1987, where I cited several excerpts from the rulings of my predecessors concerning the established custom and traditions of the House in not interfering in committee proceedings until such committees have reported to the House. This is an important rule that has clear underpinnings in logic, and I, of course, want to follow it.

Thus, after careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the Hon. Member's complaint ought properly to be dealt with in committee and, therefore, it is not a question of privilege and cannot be dealt with here unless the matter is reported to the House by the committee.

There are established practices which have been followed for a long time. One is that Members refrain from criticizing the actions of another Member without the making of a clear charge set out in a motion. The traditional and proper way of dealing with the type of conduct alleged by the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood would be by appealing the conduct of the chairman to the committee, or by way of a motion proposed to the committee and, if it is adopted, reporting the same to the House.

[*Translation*]

I hope that in future, Hon. Members will be guided by what I said on November 18, 1987 and will formulate their complaints and grievances in the committees, which are entirely capable of dealing with these matters, instead of wasting the precious time of the House. The precedents are clear: These questions do not come under the jurisdiction of the Chair.

[*English*]

JUSTICE AND SOLICITOR GENERAL—VISIT BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO MILLHAVEN INSTITUTION—MR. SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: On Wednesday, November 25, 1987, the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) raised serious matters in the House which he believed were tantamount to contempt of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General during its recent visit to the various penal institutions in the Kingston area.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. Member maintained that witnesses from Correctional Service Canada who appeared before the Standing Committee had been subject to pressure on the part of their superiors about what they should or should not say before the Committee. The Chair has allowed the House to spend quite some time discussing this matter because any allegation of suborning witnesses should be a matter of concern to all Hon. Members.

[*English*]

I wish to thank the Solicitor General, the Hon. Members for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata), Ottawa West (Mr.