

Veterans Affairs Committee Report

as I have other members, that it is an irregular practice to do this. The hon. member has the option to read the letter into the record, although we try to discourage this. Of course the letter could, with unanimous consent, be placed on the record.

Mr. Francis: Mr. Speaker, I would normally read it but in the interest of saving time I am trying to adopt an expeditious procedure because I know other hon. members are anxious to speak. I shall cite one paragraph:

In the event that further information on this matter is desired we would be pleased to make ourselves available to appear before your committee.

On April 25 the committee again met. I presume individual members of the committee had received this communication from the Royal Canadian Legion. There was an opportunity to cross-examine any of the witnesses. They were all available before the committee at that time. On April 25 the committee terminated its hearings and reported back to the house the estimates of the department in accordance with its terms of reference.

I think there has been some misunderstanding here because some members seem to think the committee was then at liberty to call the Legion personnel to give testimony before the committee because they were most anxious to make comment in respect of the testimony of Mr. Anderson. The fact is that the committee had very specific terms of reference, the estimates of the department, before it. According to the citation I have read there is no question that the committee did not have the discretion to depart from those terms of reference at that time.

There is now before this house a notice of motion which will come up on Monday next to refer the report of the Woods committee to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. It has been indicated by the spokesman for the New Democratic party that the members of that party are prepared to give unanimous consent to this motion. I hope at that point there will not be prolonged debate because it is obviously in the interest of the veterans of Canada that the committee should meet to set up an orderly procedure for dealing with this report at the earliest possible time. Upon the adoption of this motion, which I hope will be dealt with in the same non-partisan way in which other similar matters are dealt with by the house, I intend to call a meeting of the steering committee to discuss the most appropriate time for the committee to meet to deal

with the recommendations of the Woods committee. There have been suggestions that the committee should meet in September. There are other matters which will have to be taken care of before the committee can make this decision but I hope that this suggestion which has been made from more than one quarter of the house will be given earnest consideration by the committee.

I hope this will clarify a misunderstanding which apparently has arisen in some quarters of the house concerning the work of the committee and the opportunity of a group such as representatives of the Royal Canadian Legion to take part in the committee's hearings at a time when there was a specific reference before the committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Trois-Rivières on a point of order.

[Translation]

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Speaker, while listening to my colleague from Ottawa West (Mr. Francis), I noticed that he asked permission to have a letter inserted in *Hansard* and that you were about to ask unanimous consent of the house, but this did not materialize. I want to know if my hon. friend is insisting to obtain unanimous consent of the house in order to place this letter on the record.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the point of order may I say that it is entirely up to the hon. member for Ottawa West if he wants to insist that the letter be tabled, but I should point out that it is an irregular practice to table letters, speeches or charts. However, perhaps there is consent by the house that the hon. member for Ottawa West may include this in his remarks. This is a matter which is entirely up to the house.

Mr. Stanfield: I do not wish to be difficult, Mr. Speaker, but I do not think there is any point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There might not be a point of order but I am trying to clear up what appears to be a misunderstanding. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.