

give us consent to dispose without debate of several legislative items now on the order paper.

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● (1210)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. CORBETT—RECOGNITION OF CANADIAN ATHLETES

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege in a state of some disappointment. It arises from a motion which I introduced today under Standing Order 43 requesting that the government give recognition to the young athletes who would have participated in the Olympic Games in Moscow.

My privilege is that I did not hear any nays, but obviously Your Honour did. It is absolutely inconceivable to me and astounding that any member of this House would not see fit to recognize the dedication and work that these young athletes have put into preparing themselves for this event. In support of their country they have agreed to forgo the opportunity to participate.

How on earth can we expect the young people of this country to have any faith in the future, in the purpose and in the direction of the sort of government we provide for them if we are not prepared to support them in the same manner that they have supported us? I do not believe that these young athletes should be subjected to this sort of treatment by this House as a result of a muffled no spoken from behind a hand.

If there are members of this House who would deny these young people recognition, whether it be in the form of a pin, a plaque or whatever, then they should speak out and let the young athletes know who is denying them that right. But I do not believe our young people should be subjected to this sort of treatment. If there are members of this House of Commons who feel that way, let us hear who they are so that our young people can be aware of the sort of people they are dealing with in the House of Commons. I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that there was no dissent among members of this party.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I have to repeat to the hon. member that the Chair is the sole judge of whether there were any nays to a motion proposed under Standing Order 43. I can assure the hon. member that there were nays to his motion. The Chair is not in the habit of identifying them at this particular point in the procedure.

A number of motions have been proposed under Standing Order 43 which deal with congratulating a group or an individual. I believe that my predecessor was rather more strict than I about accepting this kind of motion under Standing Order 43. I am afraid that I will have to look into the number of motions designed to congratulate one group or another. I am sure the House understands that if no rules are set in this respect, there is no reason why we should not congratulate

Privilege—Mr. Clark

everybody in Canada, even every citizen for the simple fact of being a Canadian citizen.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: I would therefore ask hon. members to restrain themselves in respect of motions which deal with congratulations. Some of them can be accepted but I shall have to look into the matter.

MR. CLARK—TABLING OF WAYS AND MEANS MOTION—
IMPOSITION OF LEVY UNDER PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATION
ACT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I rise on the question of privilege. I will have to ask your indulgence and I shall naturally resume my seat if you find there is no privilege.

I want to speak about a matter which has to do in a limited way not with the rules of the House but with the courtesies of the House and the kind of consultation that makes not only Parliament work but that makes relations between the private and public sector and between the federal and provincial governments work, and which will be conducive to matters being proceeded with in a fair and positive fashion.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) after the question period, without any notice to us and to my knowledge without any notice to the provinces, to industry or others in Canada, tabled a document which indicates the determination of this government to move immediately with a very significant new refinery gate tax. This appears to have not only been announced today without consultation with any of the people seriously affected, but it seems to be an action taken unilaterally at a time when there is negotiation in process regarding energy pricing between the producing provinces and the federal government. It has been taken unilaterally here in Ottawa in the very week in which we began discussions on a constitution which will succeed in finding an agreement only if there is an atmosphere of fair play on both sides.

Certainly many of the provinces of Canada who met in good faith with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) earlier this week in Montreal will not believe they have been treated in good faith by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources considering the way he has acted regarding this unilateral and very expensive tax he has announced today.

It is difficult for us to determine quickly the exact impact of this tax. It seems to be somewhere between five cents per gallon and 12.5 cents per gallon. I would remark in passing that since February 18 the price of gasoline at the pump in Canada has risen already, including this announcement today, far in excess of the 18 cents per gallon proposed in the budget which was defeated last December.

This tax, which is proposed unilaterally and which has been dropped upon the House and the country as a surprise on a Friday afternoon by the Minister of Energy, Mines and