No. 4

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OF CANADA

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 17TH OCTOBER, 1957.

11 o'clock a.m.

PRAYERS

STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: If honourable members will permit me to say one word on the subject of oral questions before we proceed with Orders of the Day, I should like to give one or two references which, being put on the record, will make it more convenient for Members to find authoritative statements of the practice on this rather difficult subject. At the beginning of each new Parliament the Speakers have made statements on the subject of the latitude allowed in asking oral questions of the Ministers or of others. There is no express provision for these questions but there is a practice which is more or less well defined by decisions of the past. I should like to refer to the *Journals* of the House of Commons, Volume C of 1956 at page 299 and the following pages, where the Speaker of the last House made his own statement and collected the statements of previous Speakers for several Parliaments. The principal citation or the important citation from Beauchesne's third edition is citation 297 which I will read inasmuch as it is quite short. I think it summarizes the situation.

"A certain number of oral questions are permitted in practice by members, without notice, before the orders of the day are called; but these are merely allowed by courtesy in connection with the business of the house or with very urgent and important matters of public concern. They are always brief, no debate being permitted, and the replies are as concise as possible. The minister interrogated may reply at once or may direct that the usual notice be given. Such questions are governed by the same rules of order as questions of which notice has been given."

One further reference is to the *Votes and Proceedings* for Thursday, January 24, 1957, where a further statement on the subject is given. That may be useful, particularly to the new Members of the House, in ascertaining