

*Privilege—Mr. Nystrom*

receiving approximately 60 applications a day. CMHC has its hands tied because the government has failed to give legislative action to this proposal in the budget of last June. Does the minister intend to bring in the necessary amendment to the National Housing Act so this very important part of the government's response to the housing crisis can become operative immediately?

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, there are a number of changes in the plan, for example, the opportunity to provide grants rather than deferred interest. The extension of the program for an additional year requires legislation which was supported by the hon. member and his party this year, but that will have to be done when the act is returned to the House in the fall. I assume from the thrust of the hon. member's question that the response of the opposition to this very serious problem will be a lot faster than it was last year when it took us three months to get approval for that plan.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS—PRESENTATION OF SEVENTEENTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the seventeenth report of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

[Translation]

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—PRESENTATION OF SEVENTEENTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour of tabling the seventeenth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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

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[English]

### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. NYSTROM—REPORT STAGE AMENDMENT TO BILL C-124

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Madam Speaker, this morning under Standing Order 17, I gave you notice of a question of privilege that I wished to raise. I want to say at the outset that I think you are aware that I raise questions of privilege very rarely in the House. I do so now only because I feel that our privileges collectively as private Members of Parliament, and my privileges as a Member of Parliament,

have been affected by a motion that appears on today's Order Paper.

I was very careful to spend some time this morning reading Beuchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms as to what a question of privilege means concerning the work of Members of Parliament. On page 11 of Beuchesne we find Citation 16, which reads:

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions—

I will not quote any more but Beuchesne refers to the fact that privileges also refer to the services of Members of Parliament being unimpeded. In other words, we have the right as Members of Parliament to provide services to our constituents unimpeded.

My question of privilege, and I will not get into the arguments on a substantive basis, arises out of Motion No. 3 to amend Bill C-124, appearing on today's Order Paper. I will paraphrase the motion. It says that the salaries of members' staff—in other words, the staff of Members of Parliament, both the parliamentary staff here in Ottawa and our staff in the constituencies—will, when the bill is passed, be rolled back. Bill C-124 treats this staff radically different from the public servants in our country who will not have their salaries rolled back but will have their salaries limited to a 6 per cent increase next year.

If we are to serve our constituents well and if we are to do what we have been elected to do—I assure you this is not a partisan issue—we have to depend to a great extent on our staff and their morale is very important. If we are to keep our staff, it is very important that their salaries not be rolled back; otherwise certain of our staff will leave. If we are to attract good staff, it is important their salaries be at an adequate level.

You are aware, Madam Speaker, that on March 31, 1982, the staff of Members of Parliament received a salary increase of 11 per cent.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Just one moment, please, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I think I would have to reverse that and say to the hon. member "Just one moment, please." My impression is that the hon. member is debating the motion which is going to come up for debate later this day. He does not have a question of privilege but a matter of debate. I invite the hon. member to debate the issue when the motion is called precisely for that purpose.

I have listened to the hon. member and I have not been able to detect a trace of a question of privilege in what he has said. It is quite obvious to me that he is debating the motion. Of course, the hon. member has the right to debate that matter, and I hope he will when the motion is called.