

(1) Such questions should:

(a) be asked only in respect of matters of sufficient urgency and importance as to require an immediate answer.

I then want to go to Citation 359(5), which says, again referring to questions:

The matter ought to be of some urgency. There must be some present value in seeking the information during the Question Period.

Citation 360 says:

A question may not:

(3) seek information about proceedings in a committee which has not yet made its report to the House.

My point is this: we had a number of questions today that were raised on an issue which this House and the people who watch this House know is presently a matter before a committee. It is a decision of this House to have that undertaken.

I then put before you two questions, Mr. Speaker. The first one is the question of urgency. How can there be an urgency for these questions to be asked in the House of Commons during Question Period when there was a committee meeting this morning on the very same subject which, as you know from having listened to questions, members walked out of?

Second, there is scheduled a second committee on the same subject for this afternoon.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you consider the question of urgency.

Further, citation 360(3) refers to the proceedings of a committee. In fact, all of us are suffering from some confusion. We have been under the impression that if there was a hearing in a committee of the House of Commons, then there would be no need to repeat that hearing on the floor of the House of Commons, either in Question Period or at another time.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you examine those three citations in light of the questions I have put to you, because I think it is something that we as members of this House need to understand clearly. Quite frankly, if I can express a personal opinion, I am quite concerned that we are going to have a committee hearing on a subject and then have the same hearing here on the floor of the House of Commons.

Points of Order

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes three references to Beauchesne's in terms of the report of a committee and some urgency and immediacy.

Surely to God the hon. member opposite is not trying to have members of Parliament believe the contention that two documents on a very major, important subject matter are not of some urgency to the Canadian people. I think most reasonable individuals would come to the conclusion we have, that it is of great urgency to the Canadian people to know all the facts.

The second point is that the hon. member, not I, referred specifically to certain proceedings of the committee. The hon. member should know that members of this party have made requests of the Chair, of the appropriate ministers involved, to provide all the information in advance. In fact, 18 different documents have been sought. However, they have not been forthcoming.

Third, there was an agreed-upon schedule in terms of who would appear first and who would appear second. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you today that if you were to read the minutes of that committee, you would find a breach of the undertaking which the chairman of that committee gave to all members of the committee. Furthermore, certain witnesses arrived today who were not scheduled to arrive in accordance with the rules that the chairman had agreed to, which had been put forward by us. That is the second point.

• (1510)

The third point is that we did not make any reference to any committees here today in Question Period. We made reference to two public documents which are there for Canadians to read and to examine.

Finally, when has Parliament been denied the opportunity to ask questions on any particular subject matter? This is the Supreme Court in terms of democracy and Parliament, not a committee and not the back rooms of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I think these interventions are useful to clarify what is happening. All of us as members of Parliament have long lists of files of people having difficulty on immigration issues. I know that ministers who are active in these areas in the House will know that this is an ongoing major concern