

Privilege—Mr. McKinnon

evidence, clearly heard and factually reported in the electronic transcript, which was altered before the minutes were printed.

The first offence, which was of a minor nature, was when the minister introduced two separate members of his staff as both being one Mr. W. M. Beckett, director of arms control policy. The other gentleman was in fact Mr. Mathewson, the chief of policy planning. This was, as I said, a minor alteration, although his chief of policy planning might consider it surprising that he is unknown to the minister. However, the minister went on with his unusual naming, showing a much more serious lack of knowledge of who's who.

At one page of the transcript the minister referred to a Mr. Khrushchev suggesting a disarmament policy; and, incidentally, he used the present tense. In the minutes of the meeting "Mr. Khrushchev" has been deleted and "Mr. Brezhnev" substituted. To indicate that this was no mistake, Mr. Khrushchev, who has been dead for ten years, makes three more miraculous visitations in the minister's testimony in the transcript, only to turn into Mr. Brezhnev in the minutes.

● (1310)

Madam Speaker, it is no minor matter when our Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne) is unaware of who is in charge of the mightiest conventional forces in the world; but we are not here to judge the minister's acuity. A lack of acuity is not an offence under the rules of Parliament. Changing the records of a committee is, and the records of that committee were changed, without the permission of the committee.

The members of the committee have been apprised by the chairman of the committee of what happened. We are now informed that a Mr. MacKay, an assistant to the minister, who appears to have a job somewhat analogous to the man with a wheelbarrow and shovel who follows the elephant in a circus-parade—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. It took me some time to check into the notices that had been given to me to find out exactly what the hon. member was referring to. I have to point out to the hon. member that he is speaking of alterations to the minutes of a committee, which alterations, he is saying now, were discussed in the committee but not reported to the House.

At first I thought that perhaps the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) was referring to a report of the committee as tabled in the House, but as tabled in the House does not report on the alteration of the minutes of which the hon. member is now speaking. This question, therefore, obviously had to be dealt with within the committee. Since it is not before the House and has not been reported to the House, I am afraid I cannot deal with it.

The recourse which I think the hon. member followed, which was to bring up the question at the committee meeting, has been taken. I know he is not satisfied with the results of that recourse taken in committee, but I am afraid that since it is not before the House I cannot help the hon. member.

Mr. McKinnon: Madam Speaker, there is no doubt about what has transpired. This has not been discussed in committee because since that time the committee has been meeting in camera to discuss the report. The alterations were made when the committee was meeting in public, before the report was written.

I was informed by Your Honour that I could not present this matter to the House until the report had been submitted to the House, which is the case now. If you rule that I have no question of privilege, I will accept your ruling and will consider that any member of a committee can change the records of that committee at any time without breaching the privilege of anyone.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member cannot assume that. As he is demonstrating by his further remarks, the Chair cannot deal with things that take place in committees. It is true that I told the hon. member that when the report was tabled he might bring up this question; it has been tabled and it does not refer to the matter which he is now discussing. It is not before the House, therefore, and that is why I cannot deal with it.

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PETITION

MR. KEEPER—GLOBAL QUOTAS ON LEATHER FOOTWEAR

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg-St. James): Madam Speaker, I have with me a petition signed by thousands of Canadian workers from coast to coast which calls upon the cabinet to save their jobs by reinstating the global quotas on leather footwear. I should like to present the petition, Madam Speaker.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. David Smith (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2,061, 3,031, 3,456, 3,493, 3,500 and 3,574.

[Text]

CHANGE IN FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Question No. 2,061—**Mr. Cossitt:**

1. Has anyone in the Prime Minister's office or the Privy Council office conducted a study of the procedures that would be required to change the Canadian form of government to that of a republic and specifically to eliminate any connection with Great Britain or a constitutional monarchy and, if so, what are all the details including the names of the persons involved in the study?

2. Has the Prime Minister or his office caused to be investigated, methods of creating a presidential system in Canada and, if so (a) has a list of persons to be considered as the first president been drawn up and does this list include the name Pierre Elliott Trudeau (b) what title does any study recommend to be bestowed upon a head of state under such a system?