

Fisheries

this kind the House should begin in some way to deal with it, but the fact is that I am not faced with it.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, with respect to your ruling, on the point of order which has been raised by my leader and also on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar, the fact is that in the course of Your Honour's ruling you indicated that we could proceed at any time on the basis of unanimous consent, which is, of course, a practice of the House.

In accepting your ruling, I say, with respect, that as a member of the House I am prevented from doing a certain act, namely, to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs having to do with a statement the minister made outside the House. The only time I can ask for unanimous consent of the House to direct that kind of question to the minister is at the end of the question period, which would mean, of course, that the opportunity would arise during the next question period, which would be on Monday.

Therefore, in accordance with your ruling, I now ask whether there is unanimous consent of the House to allow me to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in the next question period in regard to the statement he made outside the House about the RCMP withholding information from him.

Mr. Speaker: I do not want to appear to be obstructing an effort on the part of the House, but the difficulty that we are in is that we have to recognize some procedure whereby members can seek unanimous consent of the House to do something. If a member rises on a point of order to seek unanimous consent of the House for something to be done, then if that is to be permitted—which is an extraordinary thing—and if a member says he wants to do something which seems to be prevented by the rules of the House, we would have to set aside the rules in such circumstances. The rules of the House themselves might be changed, but I think it would be dangerous if we started to do that.

Usually, in a situation like that, a member will get up in the House and, rather than changing the rules of the House, he or a minister would say he wanted to do something or say something to the House which would require the unanimous consent of the House, and he would so ask. If he did not get unanimous consent, then it could not be done. It seems to me that to permit one member to ask for unanimous consent to compel another member to do something would be to extend the practice somewhat. Before I would ever do that, I should like to reserve the matter and explore it further to see whether I might put that question a little later.

Is the hon. member for Victoria rising on the same point of order?

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, it is a very rare occasion when I get into these legal arguments about the business of the House. But I should like to point out to Your Honour, with respect, that if the government had any inclination to solve this problem and enable the Minister of

[Mr. Speaker.]

Consumer and Corporate Affairs to speak in the House, then the government need only do what it did today, namely, have the Solicitor General stay out of the House and have the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs as acting solicitor general in the House, in the same fashion as the Minister of National Health and Welfare was out of the House today and the previous minister of health and welfare was able to answer questions about his performance in that portfolio.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will take all of these imaginative suggestions into consideration to see whether there are any questions I can put to the House on Monday.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, just one last point. There is a very simple way to resolve the problem before the House, and that would be for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs himself to have the courage to get up and to ask for the unanimous consent of the House—which I can tell him we in our party would be delighted to extend to him—to make a statement on motions next Monday so he will have the opportunity in the House of Commons to make the accusations which he made against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police outside the House. That, sir, would resolve your dilemma, it would resolve the dilemma before the House, and I am sure it would meet the desire of any courageous minister—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Clark: —who is prepared to say things outside the House, to say those same things inside the House. I would simply ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to come to the aid of his colleagues here, to help Canadians know what it is that he is saying—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that we have drifted a little from the procedural point into some aspects of substance. I think we should get back to our regular practice at this time.

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● (1222)

COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT AND BANK ACT

MEASURE TO PROVIDE FOR INVESTIGATION OF COMBINES, MONOPOLIES, TRUSTS AND MERGERS

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-13, to amend the Combines Investigation Act and to amend the Bank Act and other acts in relation thereto or in consequence thereof.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)