

of the major national women's organizations. It is long overdue that this bill, which would redefine rape as a crime of violence and not as a crime of passion, is brought into the statute books of this country.

I want to ask the President of the Privy Council why, in his discussion of bills which might have been brought forward tomorrow, he was silent on the question of Bill C-53, the sexual offences legislation. Since he seems unprepared to bring the bill forward tomorrow, will he not give us an assurance that next Friday the government will bring forward Bill C-53 for the conclusion of second reading debate in order that it can be referred quickly to the justice committee, where we can make the needed amendments and where Canadian women will finally have decent rape laws?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pinard: The hon. member mentions Bill C-53, and I welcome his offer to deal with it expeditiously. On the other hand, he says that I never mentioned it. He should know that what is discussed in House leaders' meetings is to stay in House leaders' meetings, so I wonder how he can conclude that I did not mention it.

In any case, I welcome his offer and I will take that into consideration; but I am also a practical man and know very well that in the justice committee there are bills which are under consideration at this time. Even if we were to refer Bill C-53 to the justice committee on this Friday or next Friday, it is most unlikely that it could be dealt with during the next few weeks.

We may come to an agreement at a House leaders' meeting to deal with this bill or other bills quickly, but I can assure the hon. member that I have no reason to delay the study and consideration of Bill C-53 by this House. However, if he is a practical man too, he will realize that he would be welcome to help accelerate the debate in the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, of which he is a member and where some legislation is pending.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I am well aware of the legislative timetable in the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. That is no excuse for not concluding debate in the House. In view of the offer of the government House leader, I wonder whether we might hear from the House leader of the Conservative Party concerning the attitude of his party. Are they prepared to listen to the concerns of Canadian women and expedite debate on this bill at the earliest possible opportunity?

Mr. Lawrence: We think it is urgent. We think it should be debated.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Say "yes".

Mr. Nielsen: We think it is important and urgent as well, Madam Speaker. I am always ready, willing and able, as are all hon. members on this side of the House, to listen to the

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concerns of the Canadian women. I might say something, too, about them.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the President of the Privy Council a question. In view of the findings of the Supreme Court of British Columbia in the case that I am taking against the government and the cabinet, including the minister, is the minister now prepared to bring to the House amendments to the Northern Pipeline Act to make legal the orders in council which were put through by the government instead of legislation? I am aware that the court has not completely ruled on the case; but to avoid further litigation and further appeal—it is now in the court of appeal and, no doubt, appeals will go to the Supreme Court of Canada—I wonder if the President of the Privy Council could indicate whether the government has considered the possibility of bringing in legislation to deal with the order in council and make an amendment to the Northern Pipeline Act—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Waddell:—in view of the developments in the United States, as well.

Madam Speaker: I am afraid that I should not have allowed the hon. member to continue. He was not asking a question about government business, but a question about what the government might bring forward as government business in the future. That question was not altogether in order.

The hon. member for Yukon on a question of privilege.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. NIELSEN—RIGHT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN TO ANSWER QUESTIONS IN HOUSE

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I served Your Honour with the required notice under the Standing Orders that I intended to raise this question of privilege today arising out of yesterday's exchange between the hon. member for Annapolis Valley-Hants (Mr. Nowlan), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne), who I regret is not in his seat, and the government House leader.

An hon. Member: He just came in now.

Mr. Nielsen: The exchange is to be found, including the comments of the Chair, on pages 12267 through to 12278 of yesterday's *Hansard*. I see that the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi is now back in his seat.

I do not intend to submit any lengthy argument to Your Honour because that argument was very ably, logically and articulately made yesterday by the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty). However, I do wish to highlight one or two points which I submit should be taken into consideration before Your Honour comes to your ruling, both on the question itself and the substantive motion which I