

Privilege—Mr. Cassidy

Committee on Privileges and Elections. I believe that my rights as a Member, as well as the rights of all Members, particularly those in the Opposition, have been impaired by the actions and omissions on the part of the Government with respect to this particular piece of legislation.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the Hon. Member's comments. I am sorry that he feels this way. But let me say to him that at no time have I tried to withhold from him information on this particular deal. As he knows, he and his colleague, the Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis), and I met for some time last Wednesday morning. I was not in attendance during Committee of the Whole last Thursday afternoon when questions were asked, so I cannot comment on that specifically. However, I draw to his attention that the purpose of the Bill was not to discuss the remuneration, the role of CDIC or anything like that. The purpose of the Bill was to discuss the amendments to the Bank Act which affect the position of the shareholders under this particular transaction.

I believe that the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) has indicated to Opposition Members that he is prepared to meet with the Finance Committee and discuss this particular transaction and any elements relating to it.

I listened to the questions that the Hon. Member said were not answered. I do not recall not answering those questions—perhaps they were not put. There were committee meetings in the other place that were arranged by the Senate Finance Committee, so that obviously more questions would be asked during the course of the day as a result of that committee meeting. However, I do not believe that this is a question of withholding information in any way. That was not the attitude or the way in which the Government dealt with this matter.

I repeat that the Minister of State for Finance has agreed to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to respond to any questions that Hon. Members wish to put on the broader element of the transaction with the Bank of British Columbia and the Hongkong Bank of Canada. However, I believe that every question addressed to us on the specific nature of the Bill was answered.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same question of privilege. Many of us in the House are not always familiar with all the procedures of the House. When we receive a report back from the Senate, as we did on Thursday, why are the observations on that Bill made by the Senate not read into the record of the House at that time? We had to go back to *Votes and Proceedings* on the next day or days following to find out what the Senate had to say about Bill C-27. Is this a custom or tradition? Why do Members of the House have to wait until we see *Votes and Proceedings* the next day to find out what the Senate said about a certain Bill?

Mr. Speaker: We will return to the question of privilege in a moment. I want to say to the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier

(Mr. Gauthier) that the Chair will look into that matter and report back.

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I believe our position was properly covered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), but I want to add two points. First, it seems to me from listening to the question of privilege by the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) that he is concerned about matters of debate concerning whether or not he and his Party were satisfied with answers they received to questions they put.

Second, while I do not want to nitpick or in any way prevent a Member from raising a question of privilege, I want to reiterate that while I believe the use of a question of privilege is a form of safety valve in the House, I believe that if a Member lays a complaint of a breach of privilege it should conform to Citation 81(2) of *Beauchesne* which states:

A complaint of a breach of privilege must conclude with a motion providing the House with an opportunity to take some action.

After all, Mr. Speaker, that is what you are deciding, whether there is a *prima facie* case. In other words, has a *prima facie* case been made of a question of privilege which would, by and in itself, be proper to put before the House? While the Minister, who is not here, can review the Member's comments, in order for him to respond properly the Minister must have an actual motion so that we know exactly what privilege the Member is claiming has been breached.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, first I want to respond to the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary. I believe he made that complaint a number of weeks ago in relation to another question of privilege. I do not believe it is necessary for a Member who raises a question of privilege to indicate a willingness to move such a motion at the end of his remarks. I do not believe that is a requirement with respect to a question of privilege. If I am correct, I believe Your Honour has indicated that in the past. Regardless of that—and you will of course deal with that in your response—the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) indicated in his presentation that he wanted the support of the Speaker and was quite willing to have the matter referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure. I believe that we do have a *bona fide* case.

● (1530)

At the same time that the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre, as reported in *Hansard* of last Thursday at pages 1600 to 1602 inclusive, was asking questions of the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) and was being told that such information was not available, the Senate was receiving such information. I argue that the privileges of the House will be breached if the Government is willing to provide information to one House but not to the other. As the elected representatives of Canadians, we are certainly entitled to any information that the Government deems can be made public, information which