

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I thank honourable Members for their counsel. I thank each one in turn for the assistance he has extended to the Chair. Honourable Members must realize that the Chair has to rule strictly on procedural grounds. A number of the arguments presented were in some way substantive. The honourable Member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) referred to the substance of what he called the red manifesto. I think he indicated that perhaps the Chair should study this document and decide whether the amendment would or would not affect the substance of it. The honourable Member for Gander-Twilligate (Mr. Lundrigan) presented an argument along much the same lines. Fortunately the Chair does not have to go into that aspect of things before rendering the type of judgment it must render at the present time. The situation is more simple than that.

The honourable Member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and the honourable Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) in the course of their arguments have shown that they understand exactly what the difficulty is. It is not necessary to indicate to them what the worries of the Chair consist of. What we must determine now is whether it is possible to amend this type of a very simple and basic motion to the effect that a certain document be referred to a committee. In my view it is very difficult to amend that kind of motion. I find it difficult to conceive of any amendment that could be in order. Honourable Members might even wonder whether it is necessary, in the first instance, to have this type of a motion at all. That might be a very good point to consider. But that is not the kind of argument in which the Chair should become involved.

The effect of the motion is that this document be referred to a committee. This is the only proposition with which I must deal. The honourable Member for Peace River said that in his view there are many arguments to support the proposition that the amendment is acceptable, the best one was of course being that he seconded the motion. I might say that perhaps that is the only good argument for it being accepted. I wonder whether it is necessary to do all this, but for the record I shall read the motion again: "That the White Paper entitled Proposals for Tax Reform, Tabled in the House on November 7, 1969, be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs."

As I have indicated, it well may be that the committee could have easily on its own initiative studied this document without the initiative of the government and without a reference to the committee. However, this motion has been proposed and it is being considered by honourable Members. That is the motion which is before the House for debate today and Monday. The amendment reads as follows: "That the Motion be amended by adding the following thereto: with instructions to develop alternatives to the proposed disincentives affecting middle income groups and small businesses in particular, and which increase the vulnerability of Canadian enterprise to foreign take-overs."

As I said, the motion is a simple one. It proposes the reference to a standing committee of a document which deals with tax reform. The motion before the House can, I suppose, in some way be amended. But certainly the amendment proposed would have to be relevant to and have the effect of amending the main motion itself. It must not seek to amend the question which the motion would refer to the committee for consideration. That is the whole point of argument. What we are trying to do through this amendment is go in behind the motion and alter or affect in some way the substance of the question which will be considered by the committee if the motion were adopted by the House.