

Privilege—Mr. W. Baker

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the minister will agree that he is getting far away from the point of order.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I think you might find from examining the record that I have not gone much further afield than the hon. member, but I will nonetheless adhere to your good advice and stay with the question of privilege.

Announcement of this 35 million bushel sale by the Canadian Wheat Board with credit terms over an 18 month period was, as a matter of practice, made simultaneously by the Canadian Wheat Board as the selling agent and by myself because of the government policies involved, including the credit. The time for making the announcement is, in fact, determined as a matter of course by the Canadian Wheat Board. I try to accommodate their time as much as possible. I make myself available to the press because of the great interest to the nation in the matter. The House finds out about it immediately as well.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. members will agree that the Chair should not get involved in the debate that had taken place. The question that has been raised may be of importance, but the Chair only has to decide whether a prima facie case of privilege is involved.

The question is of importance to the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) and other hon. members. It is of great interest to the Canadian people. However, insofar as a breach of the privileges of hon. members is concerned, all precedents indicate there is no way the Chair can make a decision supporting the arguments of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton.

The Chair has to decide all breaches of privilege regarding the operations of this House or affecting the rights of hon. members in the performance of their duties. In any event the hon. member did not substantiate his question of privilege by a motion that would have required action by this House. Therefore I must reject his point.

Orders of the day.

● (1530)

Mr. Whelan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would just remind the House through you that none of this great debate would have taken place if it were not for the great productivity of our farmers in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Despite the minister.

[Mr. Lang.]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MEDICAL CARE ACT

AMENDMENT TO LIMIT ANNUAL INCREASE IN PER CAPITA COST OF INSURED SERVICES UNDER MEDICAL CARE PLANS

The House resumed, from Thursday, February 26, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lalonde that Bill C-68, to amend the Medical Care Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, and the amendment of Mr. Gilbert (p. 11210).

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, when I was interrupted by the clock last evening you will recall, I was admitting to puzzlement and was asking myself why the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) chose this particular time to renege on the undertaking of a previous Liberal government, the Pearson government, to provide assistance to the provinces in the medicare field, at the same time repudiating an undertaking given ten years earlier by the Diefenbaker government to assist the provinces in the supply of hospital services. Is it, I was asking myself, because the minister feels that the basic infrastructure is now in place, and that in consequence federal assistance can now be withdrawn? Happily for me, my knowledge of the inside of a hospital is very limited, but I am aware of the lack of hospital facilities across the country.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Kaplan) on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Kaplan: Madam Speaker, it should be drawn to the hon. member's attention that this is not a bill dealing with hospitals. Hospitals are covered by the Hospital Insurance Diagnostic Services Act. The government is not cutting back or setting a ceiling on any kind of hospital costs. This is a medicare bill. The hon. member should be brought to order.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. I merely want to remind the parliamentary secretary that Bill C-68 is an act to amend the Medical Care Act.

As long as the hon. member points out the relation with medical care, it is difficult to call him back to order.

[English]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I find it a little difficult to dissociate medicare from hospitals. Medicare is given in hospitals. I would remind the hon. member that hospital services came first under a Conservative government; it took another ten years before his government got around to medicare.

As I was saying, we know that the hospital situation and the provision of medical care in hospitals have not been solved at the present time. Anyone who has any cause to be admitted to a hospital has first to wait for many, many months in any province in this dominion of ours. Of