

*Privilege—Mr. Knowles*

under review. I hope to be able to report back to him and other hon. members opposite in the very near future.

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**PETRO-CANADA**

## FINANCING THEREOF

**Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Is it true that the recommendations of the task force on PetroCan are hung up in cabinet, due to the resistance of the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance, because they do not want to assume the cost of servicing the debt minus the assets and cash flow? If this is true, what changes can we expect in the bill that would be different from the recommendations?

**Hon. Walter Baker (President of Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's imagination knows no bounds. I just want to assure him that, as the Prime Minister mentioned a few days ago, the matter of the report of the task force and the question with respect to PetroCan is under review by the government. When that review is completed an announcement will be made in the House in the appropriate way.

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**THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**

## INTEREST RATE—SERVICING OF DEBT

**Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** Mr. Speaker, may I put a supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board? Given the present interest rates, could the minister indicate how much the annual cost of servicing that debt would be, and from which envelope he expects to pick the money?

**Mr. Crosbie:** Order paper!

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will agree that the hon. member's question is purely hypothetical and a very difficult one for me to answer without the figures being supplied.

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**PRIVILEGE**

## MR. KNOWLES—RESTATEMENT OF POSITION ON RULE CHANGES

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I indicated to you by a note that I would raise a question of privilege, although perhaps it is more properly a point of order.

When the hon. member for Beaches (Mr. Richardson) put his question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare

[Mr. Atkey.]

(Mr. Crombie) on the question of abortion, he indulged in a *non sequitur* that made me feel I had a point of order right then. However, I decided I would respect the traditions of this House and wait until the question period was over.

I must say, however, that I think it is quite unfair, in the question period, to drag in some other member's name on a subject not related to the point of the question, giving that other member no chance to reply. This is precisely what the hon. member for Beaches did. He said that the member for Winnipeg North Centre was opposed to changes in the rules respecting the rights of private members.

My colleagues around here have been reminding me of the number of changes in the rules for which I have had some responsibility over the years. I welcome the prospect of a white paper on procedure and the opportunity to discuss our rules and to bring them up to date.

I suppose that what the hon. member has seen—I have not but I know I have said this sort of thing to the media—is that, much as I want to see improvements, particularly for private members, I would resist changes that were purely for the purpose of relieving the government of its responsibility to take a stand on issues such as capital punishment and abortion.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles:** The government has control of this House and can deal with these matters, and its will can prevail if it so wishes. My protest has been against using something as important—almost as sacred—as the rules of this House to relieve the government of its responsibility.

The statement to the effect that I was opposed to improving the rules for the private members of this House is totally and utterly false and a *non sequitur*.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Robin Richardson (Beaches):** Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the hon. member has explained his position. I was responding to what I had read in the *Toronto Star* a few weeks ago.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Richardson (Beaches):** From what I have read, it was my impression that he was opposed to this much needed reform. I am very glad to hear that he is fully in support of this much needed reform for private members' bills.

I would ask the hon. member to accept my apology. I am sorry that I misunderstood his position and I am glad that he clarified it.

## MRS. APPOLLONI—VIVISECTION OF HUMAN FETUSES

**Mrs. Ursula Appolloni (York South-Weston):** Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege arises from the answer which the Acting Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacDonald) gave to me in the House yesterday and which is also printed on page 1550 of *Hansard*.