

Privilege—Mr. Knowles

[*Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

[*English*]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Do I have permission not to see the clock so that we can continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Madam Speaker: It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1.03 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. KNOWLES—NORTHERN PIPELINE ACT—USE OF ORDER IN COUNCIL AUTHORITY

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am ready to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) if the House is agreeable.

The Chair was invited to act on the basis that an action of the government is illegal. I would repeat that this is not within my purview, but even if it were I would have one minor difficulty in that the document referred to is not now before the House. However, even in that case I would have to remind hon. members that it is not for the Chair to determine the legality of an action of the government; I am not expected, nor should I be expected, to place a legal interpretation on such a document, as it relates to a statute.

The hon. member is probably not wanting me to rule on the document itself; he would wish me to send it to the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments. But this is something the House itself should decide. Perhaps at some future time it will decide on such a course but must do so of its own volition, not from some action on my part. If the House wishes to make a reference to a committee it must do so on its own.

Before I would give priority to a debate on such a motion I would have to be convinced that there is an element of privilege involved in the question raised by the hon. member

for Winnipeg North Centre, and I must say that having examined all the arguments put before me I do not find there is a prima facie case of privilege.

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[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

PRESENTATION OF THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Claude Tessier (Mégantic-Compton-Stanstead): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of tabling in the House in both official languages the third report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. May I also add that, with the consent of the House, I intend to move that the report be concurred in later today on motions.

[*Editor's Note: For text of the above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH U.S. PRESIDENT AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, last night I was asked to table certain documents and I undertook to obtain them. Among them there was a letter which the Prime Minister sent to the President of the United States back in March. We have been authorized by American officials to allow the tabling of this document so as to make it public. I am therefore pleased to table a letter sent last March 12 by the Prime Minister to President Carter. I will have other documents to table in a few moments. However, Madam Speaker, several members on both sides of the House have asked me whether it would be possible that the documents tabled last night as well as these letters be printed as appendices to today's *Hansard*, so as to make them readily available. We have no objection, and if such is the wish of the House, then we would agree that the letters exchanged by President Carter and the Prime Minister of Canada, the Congress resolution, the agreement signed, and the memorandum of understanding between the American oil producers and distributors be printed as appendices to today's official report, that is the documents I tabled last night as well as this letter.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House?

[*English*]

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): If the hon. gentleman is asking for consent to that suggestion, he has it.