

Privilege—Mr. Deans

In any event, according to Beauchesne:

The distinctive mark of a privilege is its ancillary character. The privileges of Parliament are rights which are "absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers". They are enjoyed by individual Members—

I want to put to Your Honour that a practice has grown up which has eroded my privileges as a member. There is in the land at the moment considerable concern about the economy. It is necessary for me as a member to be able to place before the House of Commons a number of questions directly related to economic matters. It is important that those questions be put in the House of Commons to someone who is held responsible for the administration of matters economic, and at the moment the minister who is primarily responsible for economic matters sits in the other place. There is no parliamentary secretary sitting in the House of Commons who answers directly for the senator who has the primary responsibility for matters of economic direction by the Government of Canada as it relates to industrial development.

I therefore put it to Your Honour that under the interpretations both of Erskine May and of Beauchesne—the interpretation which I just recently placed before you—it is of vital importance that there be an opportunity for members to be able to exercise the privilege which enables them to execute their powers, which I am being denied. Not only I, but also every other member of the House of Commons, is being denied a privilege which heretofore we had.

I therefore ask, Madam Speaker, that you consider whether it is appropriate for a member of the Senate to be given a senior portfolio in the cabinet of the government without there sitting in the House of Commons a member who is designated to answer all questions which might otherwise be asked of that minister who has the power to exercise jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member because I feel that the question he has raised as a question of privilege is not a question of privilege. It has been a practice of this government and of several governments before to appoint ministers who sit in the other House and to designate a minister or ministers who may answer questions members of this House might have concerning the responsibilities of a particular ministry. At any rate, they can be asked of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), should no minister have been designated. The fact that senators sitting in the other House are appointed ministers is a well established practice and, of course, cannot be questioned. Perhaps this is a question concerning the administration of the government, but it cannot be raised as a question of privilege. So I am afraid that the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr Deans) is not founded.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

TABLING OF LIST OF CABINET COMMITTEES

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 41(2) I am tabling a list of cabinet committees and their members. As a convenience to the House I suggest this list be printed as an appendix to today's *Hansard*.

Madam Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: For list referred to above, see Appendix.]

MOTIONS TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

[English]

Madam Speaker: I have received two written statements requesting emergency debates under Standing Order 26, one from the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) and one from the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). Since the first application I received was the one from the hon. member for Oshawa, I will hear his statement now.

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THE ECONOMY

ALLEGED CRISIS REQUIRING NATIONAL RECOVERY PROGRAM

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 26 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the fact that Canada now faces its most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, with unemployment at a post-war record of 8.6 per cent—in real numbers well over a million Canadians—and inflation at 12.5 per cent, both constituting a national emergency requiring, therefore, an immediate program for national economic recovery with job creation as its highest priority.

Madam Speaker: While the Chair recognizes the importance and the seriousness of this matter, the House will agree that the state of the economy has unfortunately been a recurring subject for debate since the beginning of this session and that a change in the figures relating to unemployment and inflation does not necessarily mean that the business of the House should be set aside in order to have an emergency debate.