

Ruling by Mr. Speaker

[English]

FISHERIES

DEFICIENCY PAYMENT TO EAST COAST FROZEN FISH INDUSTRY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank D. Moores (Bonavista-Trinity-Conception): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Fisheries. Is it the intention of the government to renew the deficiency payment to the east coast frozen fish industry when this program expires in the near future?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, we shall have to develop another program to take its place. The current program will terminate at the end of this month.

REQUEST FOR RESTORATION OF SALT SUBSIDY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, considering the serious economic situation facing Newfoundland fishermen, is the government considering reinstating the salt rebate that was granted to our east coast fishermen?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I ought to inform hon. members that we have already gone beyond the time allotted to the question period, by a few minutes. I felt that hon. members who did not sit in the front benches and who had not had an opportunity to ask questions ought to have the opportunity to do so. That is why today we went beyond the time allotted to the question period, by a few minutes.

PRIVILEGE

MR. MACINNIS (CAPE BRETON-EAST RICHMOND)—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: If hon. members will allow me perhaps I might be permitted to unburden myself of a weighty opinion relating to a point raised yesterday in the house on a question of privilege.

At the opening of the sitting yesterday the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. MacInnis), rising on a question of privilege concerning the attendance in the house of ministers during the question period, proposed to move:

That the matter of scheduling of ministers in the house and the general conditions affecting the daily question period be referred to the special committee on procedure.

[Mr. Chrétien.]

In the course of his argument the hon. member raised two distinct questions. On the one hand the hon. member referred to rulings of the Chair dealing with questions directed to ministers "in capacities other than of departments they represent". He has raised as a second point the question of the scheduling of attendance of ministers in the house.

In considering the first point I have read carefully the reference at page 3756 of *Hansard* for June 1, 1966, the page to which the hon. member alluded. On that occasion a notice of question had been filed seeking information from the Minister of National Health and Welfare, presumably in his capacity as minister for Nova Scotia. A ruling was then made to the effect that a question must be addressed to a minister in relation to his administrative responsibilities.

It seems to the Chair that there is nothing inconsistent between the ruling made on that occasion and any decision or ruling of the Chair in relation to the recent procedure in asking questions of acting ministers.

The very limited ambit of the previous ruling was to the effect that a minister may be asked questions relating to a department for which he has ministerial responsibility or acting ministerial responsibility, but a minister cannot be asked nor can he answer questions in another capacity, such as being responsible for a province, or part of a province or, again, as spokesman for a racial or religious group.

As I stated when this very point was raised by the hon. member on Friday last as a point of order, it has been a common occurrence for many years to have ministers reply to questions dealing with departments for which they have an acting responsibility.

With reference to the second argument advanced by the hon. member, I expressed my concern yesterday about two aspects of the proposed question of privilege and the motion based thereon. In the first instance I referred to citation 104(3) of Beauchesne's fourth edition wherein it is stated in part:

● (3:20 p.m.)

A matter of privilege which claims precedence over other public business should be a subject which has recently arisen and which calls for the immediate interposition of the house.

The Chair might again refer to and read part of citation 104(5) of the same authority, as follows:

As a motion taken at the time for matters of privilege is thereby given precedence over the