

offends the government's sense of order or because it takes time. That deprives hon. members on both sides of the House of the right to question and examine the specific initiatives which are being taken by the government. That is a considerable affront to our responsibilities as parliamentarians. I find it inexcusable that the minister, who normally stands for the rights and privileges of members of this House, would simply waive aside this particular area of initiative which is one of the areas of responsibility we have here, that is, to hear statements on motions on initiatives taken by the government and to have an opportunity to make statements in reply, or to question.

Apparently, a new principle is now being enunciated by the government House leader, that because this particular procedure is not satisfactory to the government, on future occasions these statements will not be made in the House. I find that unacceptable and feel that it very much affects the privileges of all members of this House.

**Mr. McGrath:** On the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I will recognize other hon. members, but we have been through this before; it has a familiar lyric. We have argued on previous occasions, both under existing procedures and under previous procedures, whether the making of a statement outside the House constitutes a question of privilege. It has been ruled consistently that it does not. I do not know how the general proposition can be any different from the specific one. But in any case, I will hear the hon. member for St. John's East.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I offer a suggestion to the government House leader because this matter is in his hands. If he finds the present procedure for ministerial statements provided for under the new rules which provide for relevant responses, and only Your Honour can rule whether responses are relevant, not the government House leader, and for questions unsatisfactory—and I suspect he finds it unsatisfactory because it cuts too much into his time—why does he not bring a motion to refer this matter back to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization so that we can have a look at it?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to precipitate a question of privilege today, especially inasmuch as this discussion is eating into the time reserved for the opposition, which I always protect diligently. Therefore, I will make my remarks briefer than usual. All I am saying is that, under the Standing Order on statements by ministers, we find the following:

On motions, as listed in section (2) of this Standing Order, a minister of the Crown may make an announcement or statement of government policy.

It is an option that is open to a minister which is provided in the Standing Order. It is not a breach of order or a breach of privilege if the option is exercised one way or another. I have said—and it is not intended to be a reflection on any ruling made by the Chair—that from the point of view of the government, the procedure has not been working satisfactorily.

### *Order Paper Questions*

That is all I have said, and I think hon. members have found from time to time that certain other procedures in the House are not working satisfactorily. This procedure is not working as satisfactorily as we expected; that is all. As ministers, we will continue to make statements on motions. There is, obviously, no indication that that is to be changed, but I suggest that when a minister makes a statement outside the House he is not in breach of order or in breach of the privileges of any hon. member.

**Mr. McGrath:** He is in breach of our practices.

**Mr. MacEachen:** In fact, I believe that if ministers exercised this option as often as they could exercise it, it would be a very chaotic situation because hardly a day goes by but ministers issue information which could be put together in the form of a statement. I believe that this proceeding has to be looked at again to give proper satisfaction to hon. members in the way it used to give proper satisfaction.

● (1532)

The appeal of the hon. member for Cape Breton-The Sydneys is very touching. He asks me to move quickly to restore the Devco votes. I enjoyed the public penance. It has moved me greatly, but I am not so sure I will take the political chestnuts of the Tory party out of the fire on Monday.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** What about your own?

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### ANTI-INFLATION ACT

TABLING OF REFERENCE SENT TO MINISTER BY BOARD

**Mr. Ed. Lumley (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 17(2) of the Anti-Inflation Act, I wish to table, in both official languages, a copy of a reference sent to the minister by the Anti-Inflation Board.

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[Translation]

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

**Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: 99, 202, 243, 320, 339, 367, 553 and 557.