

*Finance*

Chair has to decide in the circumstances whether there is a prima facie case that ought to be referred to a committee or which requires action of some kind.

The matter raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is essentially the same as that raised by the hon. member for Peace River, except in the case of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre there is a proposed motion.

On examining closely the point raised by the hon. member for Peace River it appears that he has endeavoured in his notice filed with the Chair, which he has reiterated in the course of his presentation, to bring two aspects of the question before the House, namely, that certain statements, because of their nature, ought to have been made in the House and that replies given in response to questions in the House have misled and deceived hon. members.

The first point, namely, that certain statements ought to have been made in the House, is a question that has been raised from time to time over the years. It is a difficult problem, one that has tried the wisdom of many of my predecessors, and one for which I fear it is difficult to provide a solution.

It has been raised by hon. members during this Parliament on a number of occasions. I have ruled from time to time, whenever the matter has been raised, that it was not really a question of privilege which justified a motion being put to the House for debate and on which a vote would eventually be taken to decide whether the matter would be referred to a committee.

I must acknowledge my greater difficulty in dealing with the second point raised by the hon. member to the effect that replies given to questions in the House have misled and deceived members. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for Peace River have indicated that they do not propose to suggest there has been wilful misrepresentation to the House. They suggested that the matter might perhaps be cleared up after further study by a committee of this House.

● (2:30 p.m.)

If the intent of the proposed motion were to establish a deliberate deception by a member or by members, the Chair must consider the often-cited statement on that point made by my distinguished predecessor, Mr. Speaker

Michener, which is to be found at page 584 of the *Journals* of 1959, in the following words:

In my view, simple justice requires that no hon. member should have to submit to investigation of his conduct by the House or a committee until he has been charged with an offence.

If the Chair were to accept the motion proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, and if the matter were sent to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, what would be under consideration there except the conduct of a minister? I suggest that this is what would be under consideration, and that this could be done only by adopting the procedures and measures which have been suggested on a number of occasions by the Chair, particularly by Mr. Speaker Michener in the ruling to which I have just referred.

It does seem to me that implicit in the question raised by the hon. member for Peace River is a dispute or a misunderstanding arising between members as to allegations of fact. The Minister of Finance has interpreted the situation as he sees it. Obviously, he is in disagreement on this point with the hon. member for Winnipeg North, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for Peace River. As stated in citation 113 of Beauchesne's fourth edition:

A dispute arising between two members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

I have to rule in the circumstances that the motion proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre does not fulfil the requirements for a prima facie case of privilege and I cannot accept it to the extent of putting it to the House at the present time. I have to rule there is no prima facie case of privilege.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### FINANCE

#### REPORT ON WINNIPEG MEETING OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL MINISTERS

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to report to the House on the meeting of the Federal-Provincial Committee of Ministers of Finance and Provincial Treasurers in Winnipeg last Friday and Saturday.

There were some significant developments during the course of this conference which have an important bearing on current eco-