

Committee Reports

Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques for a budget debate. At that time, it suited his purposes not to do so.

In conclusion, I say to the House that my hon. friend's point of privilege is based on the theory that last night's speech was a Budget. It is very clear that we have already had the Budget for the financial year of April 1, 1987, to March 31, 1988. We have had a budget debate. We are in the process of finalizing the legislation. I believe that there is no *prima facie* case of privilege, there is no actual case of privilege and I would ask that you rule accordingly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I know that you have been very patient to listen to most of the Members who made interventions, but I should like to make a very brief remark. When I put my case earlier there was a document I did not have with me but which I have now and from which I would like to quote. The quotation is not very long, four lines. At the same time it will show that the Parliamentary Secretary on the Government side does not seem to have understood the point I want to raise.

I do not want to discuss whether this is a Budget or not, although it is an interesting question. What is written in the notice I sent you is that I submit that there were misleading statements made in the House which affect the privileges of Hon. Members. And the most significant statement—there were a few which I pointed out earlier—appears at the bottom of page 7318 of yesterday's *Hansard*, right-hand column. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) was answering a question put to him by the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), the Leader of the New Democratic Party. I just want to read the last four lines because they are the most important part and what I would ask the Chair to consider. The Prime Minister described the exercise that was to take place last night as follows:

It sets forth the general thrust of government thinking, but it is not a Budget in a sense that it does not, per se, take effect the very same day pursuant to a Way and Means Motion.

That is the whole problem. The Prime Minister told us that "it does not, per se, take effect the very same day," and he told us there would be no Ways and Means Motion. And that is what I would like the Chair to consider.

I shall refrain from using unparliamentary language, but I must say, however politely, that this statement is certainly at variance with what actually happened later, at about 8 p.m., when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) rose in the House and made his statement—a Budget to some, a White Paper to others. In any event, there is certainly a problem when we compare the facts with the remarks made by the Prime Minister, which I just quoted.

My point is, that considering these obvious differences between the real situation and what was said by the Prime Minister, the Members of this House were misled and, as a result, were not adequately prepared to perform their role of responding to the measures tabled by the Minister of Finance.

That is the main point of my argument, and I see no relevance in the reply given by the Parliamentary House Leader who is trying to establish that various kinds of economic statements have, on occasion, included the tabling of Ways and Means Motions. That I agree, but that is not the point I am trying to make. My point is that the Prime Minister failed to inform the House accurately. In fact, the information he gave was the direct opposite of what actually happened a few hours later.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I have listened with great care to the comments of the Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques (Mr. Guilbault), the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary and others. I think that Hon. Members would approve if I reserved my decision because I want to look very carefully at the text, both in French and in English.

● (1250)

As I indicated in reading a short excerpt from my ruling of yesterday, the Chair may indeed have had some difficulty with the facts, if I can put it that way, whatever they were. Again I thank all Hon. Members and I shall return to the Chamber with a ruling as soon as I can.

I might also say that due to some pressing matters I would ask that you excuse me from the Chamber, and that is no disrespect to Members on a Friday afternoon. The Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) has a matter to raise in a few minutes and the Deputy Speaker will deal with that.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour to table in both official languages, the Government's response to petitions, Nos. 332-2110 and 332-2426.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

PRESENTATION OF SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Ted Schellenberg (Nanaimo—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, as vice-chairman of the committee I have the honour to present the second report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in both official languages. This report deals with the Small Craft Harbours Program and urges the Government to fund that program more properly.