

other time for that matter and get the committee to do what the House has ordered because the committee does not have the choice to do anything otherwise. That is quite clear in both Beauchesne's citation 621 and the Standing Orders of our House.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I am slightly confused by that presentation. At page 16 of last Wednesday's *Hansard* you will find a list of special committees. It does not include any committee dealing with Oka or any issue of native affairs.

We are dealing with a standing committee of the House, which has all of the powers that apply to standing committees according to our Standing Orders, plus a reference to that committee from the House.

It is a bit premature to conclude that anything about that standing committee as being different to any other committee. Any of the standing committees of the House can be charged by the House with a specific responsibility at any time. It is my understanding that they are taking the responsibility which was handed them—relating to the Oka situation—very seriously indeed. They are trying to develop an approach and a pattern that will be truly productive in terms of providing the House with good, solid advice for the future. That is what they are after.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, we are anxious to get on with the business of the House.

I would like to emphasize what my hon. colleague raised earlier. No one is impugning motives. It is an important committee. The work is extremely important. There is \$60 plus million of taxpayers' money and about one-third of the Canadian army involved in one way or another. It is a major issue to consider. It would appear for whatever set of reasons that the committee's work is not functioning as it ought.

Mr. Speaker, you mentioned, in your comments of November 19, on page 15393 of *Hansard*, that "I", meaning yourself, "of course assume, having said that, that the committee is working". The point being made this morning is that it would appear that the committee has ground to a halt and is unable to proceed. I do not think this is a major problem. I think it needs to have further discussion. We are asking, Mr. Speaker, if you

could not facilitate that discussion to ensure that it takes place.

Routine Proceedings

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has been very patient in hearing the submissions. We know what the general procedural law is, and the strictures against the Speaker interfering where the Speaker ought not to be.

From what I hear there is disagreement in the committee as to a motion or certain motions that have been proposed. I also hear from the government side, as the hon. member for Calgary West has asserted, that the committee is dealing with the matter. It is not closed. The committee has not walked away from the House order of reference.

The better thing to do at the moment would be to continue the discussions within the committee and perhaps that will resolve the matter.

It is fair to say that the issue, which I think is accepted on all parts of the House, is an important issue. Members on both sides, I think, are in agreement that it is. It is also an issue which has been placed with the committee as a consequence of a consent order of this House. There does not seem to be any argument about the importance of this issue. There seems to be still some disagreement as to how to deal with it. I would hope that those disagreements could be worked out as soon as possible.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief.

I would like to remind the House that Standing Order 621, subsection (2) says very clearly:

A committee is bound by, and is not at liberty to depart from, the Order of Reference.

This issue has been referred to that committee. The debates in committee as to whether or not the committee should follow the order of reference of the House is out of order. That debate itself should not, and cannot, take place in that committee and it is. That is the contention this morning, the fact that the committee is debating whether or not it should follow what we, as a House, have ordered. It does not and cannot have that mandate, according to our rules. That is the other point I wanted to make.