

MR. GOW

I have been pursuing procedure with Murdo and the Clerks.

The Prime Minister was technically correct in her Answer to Mikardo in respect of normal departmental Select Committee procedure. As a non-Member of the relevant Committee, the Prime Minister would not have access to a transcript until the evidence was published. (But publication takes place in daily parts two to three weeks after the hearing: it does not await submission of the report. The Prime Minister's Answer therefore requires liberal interpretation on this point).

The advent of public hearings has changed some aspects of House practice. On occasion, therefore, uncorrected evidence from significant public hearings is placed in the Library. I regret to say that this happened in the case of Michael Edwardes' evidence. In House of Commons terms, therefore, the Prime Minister had not been denied access to it.

Mikardo's Question was in order. The Chair has no knowledge of proceedings of Select or Standing Committees until they have reported, but this does not make it out of order to refer on the Floor to evidence presented at a public hearing.

I think we must now let matters rest. It seems that the Speaker could have caused himself some embarrassment in this particular case if he had intervened, although it was entirely reasonable for the Prime Minister to look to him on the basis of normal practice.



4 February 1982

MR. MIKARDO: Has the Prime Minister had an opportunity to consider the evidence given to the Select Cttee on industry and trade last Wednesday by ~~Seir~~ Sir Michael Edwardes and his colleagues, in which he said that they would discuss the alternative plans put forward for preserving the truck division with shop stewards at Bathgate and Leyland? That statement has turned out to be untrue. Is the r h Lady aware that such occurrences damage confidence in the management of British Leyland? Will she ask her r h F the Secy of State for Industry to have a look at the matter?

(THE PRIME MINISTER:  
~~The Prime Minister:~~)

I have not seen any more than the evidence published in the press. Under the rules of the Hse, I do not think that I would be able to see any more -

(MR. SKINNER:)

How long has the r h Lady been a M of Parlt?

When a Select Cttee is involved,  
 (THE PRIME MINISTER: I see only what is published in the press <sup>H</sup> when a ~~Se~~ Select Cttee is involved in

[Interruption] - Until the report has been published and laid before the Hse. [Interruption.] I have seen the evidence that the press has produced and I shall draw the h G's remarks to the attention of my r h F the Secy of S

not confirmed