

from which I must quote, that the Conservative party is pushing for a 50-mile limit—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I should like the hon. member to remember what I suggested a moment ago. It is a well established practice of the House that questions must be asked directly. The hon. member, I am sure, can ask the question directly without making a direct allusion or reference to statements made outside the House. The hon. member can ask the question on that basis and there will be no difficulty.

Mr. Lundrigan: Your Honour, I am handicapped in asking questions on this matter unless I can refer to the charge, if you can call it that, or allegation or fabrication which was made by the minister on Saturday wherein he indicated that the position of the Conservative party of Canada is to push for a 50-mile limit. Further, maps were included at the end of his presentation. He had a 50-mile limit drawn on the map, which he contends is the position of my party, along with a 200-mile limit. I ask the minister, what was the basis for drawing that conclusion?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have just indicated to the hon. member that the question cannot be asked in those terms. I appreciate that it may be hard to find a way around the difficulty, but there should be some way for the hon. member to obtain the information he wants. Perhaps the minister will reply briefly to the question asked by the hon. member, assuming that the question has been asked directly without reference to or quotation from the statement made outside the House, after which I will recognize the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville who has a supplementary to the previous question.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, my response has to be that I listened attentively to the hon. member and other hon. members opposite, and that is my interpretation of their position.

Mr. Lundrigan: On a question of privilege, Your Honour, it is very important that members of the Privy Council, House leaders, and leaders of parties be responsible in the public statements they make. This applies especially to people in these very responsible positions. I contend, Your Honour, that if members of the Privy Council are permitted to go outside the House, or even to do this inside the House, and make presentations that are complete fabrications, they are undermining not only the privileges of all members of the House but also the whole political process of our country. What if the Leader of the Opposition were to say today that the Liberal party supported free abortion or supported termination of diplomatic relations with the United States? I would consider that to be a very serious matter if such statements were not in accordance with the facts. On Saturday the minister proceeded to make a public statement. I suppose it was actually presented but at least it was released on Saturday with the indication that it would be presented in New Brunswick. The presentation indicated that the position of my party was that there would be—

Some hon. Members: Order!

Oral Questions

Mr. Lundrigan: I am going to go on, anyway. The minister talks about a 200-mile limit and then goes on to ask, where do our Conservative friends stand now; they are talking about a 50-mile limit. He said that this is Conservative thinking and he went on to reflect on the Conservative party as having a policy relating to a 50-mile limit. At no time has any member of this party ever indicated that Canada should seek a 50-mile limit.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member, I appreciate, has risen on a question of privilege and has referred to a statement made outside the House. The hon. member has the right to rise at this time on a question of privilege, and when he does he has to be heard. When I return to the Chair every Monday, having read the newspapers and seen the many statements made by hon. members referring to the political situation and the political positions taken by members of other parties or spokesmen for other parties, it is my impression that we could spend much of our Mondays and Tuesdays discussing these statements which I am sure in many instances are felt by hon. members on one side or the other not to represent in fact the positions of their parties. The hon. member, again I insist, has the right to rise on a question of privilege, but I hope we will not get involved in a lengthy debate on the matter.

● (1500)

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday last, I rose in the House and moved a motion under Standing Order 43. I wish to read the contents of that motion. The motion reads:

That Canada express its position to the fishing nations of the world, through the Secretary of State for External Affairs, that the principle of ownership by the coastal state of the waters over the continental shelf be upheld.

I have stated this position about 500 times in the past five years, but the minister had the gumption to go to New Brunswick and present maps prepared by his department indicating a 50-mile limit and a 200-mile limit. This is completely absurd.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lundrigan: A year ago last December 1,500 delegates from every constituency in Canada assembled at a meeting of the Conservative Association of Canada and presented resolutions.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that he is now going beyond the assertion of a question of privilege and is debating the issue. I do not think the hon. member would want to do that at this time. There are many possibilities for hon. members to discuss issues, even issues of such importance as the one referred to by the hon. member, but the question period is certainly not the time to initiate a full-fledged debate on a matter of substance. I am sure the hon. member appreciates the position of the Chair in this respect in seeking his co-operation.

Mr. Lundrigan: I will be happy to do that, Mr. Speaker, if the minister will withdraw his remarks which were lies and fabrications, absolute lies and fabrications.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!