

Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne) recognizes it or not. The hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) asked a question, and he asked it not about people who were breaking the law; he asked a question not about people who have been charged; he asked a question about hundreds and perhaps thousands of men and women currently working for the Post Office who had a letter sent to them from the Post Office which I say, coming from an industrial town, would never be sent by General Motors to UAW members under such circumstances.

Not only did he ask a question about men and women who were not breaking the law but about men and women who are good citizens of this country and in whom he is interested. The question of privilege pertains exactly to what the minister said. I do not have the "blues" here but I know I have exactly the gist of his comments. The minister said in reply that the hon. member for Sudbury—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent:—that the hon. member for Nickel Belt was more interested in protecting lawbreakers than he was in coming to grips with the problems of the Post Office. Mr. Speaker, that is a very serious accusation regarding any member of this House, that he is interested in supporting lawbreakers. The hon. member for Nickel Belt never, inside or outside this House, at any time, has taken that position that I am aware of nor in this question specifically does the minister's irresponsible reference have any appropriate reference to what the hon. member, for my party, asked in very good conscience for a very good cause.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will have to examine the record. There is an allegation that the answer given by the minister did make some sort of imputation of motives to the hon. member for Nickel Belt. The minister in response has said—I take it his response was that if he did that, he did not intend it, but intended to say that he wondered whether that was the case. I do not know.

● (1512)

I shall have to examine what was said in the first instance by reading the record, and then in turn examine the contribution of the minister today to determine if in fact there is any basis for a question of privilege. I will undertake to do that and we can raise that in the House tomorrow when we have had an opportunity to examine the record.

MR. HORNER—STATISTICS USED IN STANDING ORDER 43
MOTION

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising out of the abuses occurring, to me particularly today, under the provisions of Standing Order 43.

Standing Order 43 was re-adopted in the House of Commons in 1975. It is to allow the opposition or government members to bring to the attention of the ministry matters of

urgency and pressing necessity. Standing Order 43 is being used to make false accusations against ministers, and questioning minister's words, as was done today with regard to the figures used in manufacturing. There are more people working in manufacturing today than ever before in Canada. There are 2,006,000 people working. There are 130,000 more people working in manufacturing today than there were a year ago.

Those are Statistics Canada figures. I have them here with me. Why did I have them with me? Because I am aware of the abuses that are occurring under the provisions of Standing Order 43. The hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) and I got into a discussion yesterday during the question period, if you recall. One could go back and check the pattern. He apparently thought he lost that round, so he came in with a cheap attack on the manufacturing figures by the use of Standing Order 43, whereby I could not rise to correct him.

He did not dare ask me a question on manufacturing today, but he uses that tactic. He is an old boxer and telegraphs his punches, and he telegraphed this one, so I came—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: As a House, Mr. Speaker, we have to help you create an order of some semblance of fairness so that the people of Canada can have an accurate picture of what is going on in this country. You cannot allow the use of Standing Order 43 to abuse the words of the ministry and not be challenged. I really believe the accusations which the hon. member made on the question of manufacturing figures really put my word in jeopardy. I cannot allow that to happen because I am not wrong, I have the figures here. And you, Mr. Speaker, cannot create an order of good will, or a semblance of order which lends itself to rational debate, if continued abuses of the provisions of Standing Order 43 are allowed to continue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, to begin with, the minister started with a false premise. He said I was under the impression that I lost the debate yesterday. I won it hands down.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: Secondly, I based my question yesterday and my motion under Standing Order 43 today on statistics that were produced in his own department, Stats-Can. These figures were produced very recently, which stated that the manufacturing industry in Canada in each of the months of September and October lost 11,000 jobs.

An hon. Member: What year?

Mr. Hees: That is this year. And, Mr. Speaker, 11,000 jobs a month is at an annual rate of 130,000 jobs.

I would like to repeat the question on which this is based and which I asked the minister yesterday. You will see the