

*Privilege—Mr. Crosbie*

**Mr. Robinson (Burnaby):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning the answer which was given by the Solicitor General during the question period today. I want the record to be very clear that the Solicitor General was in fact yesterday morning given detailed information concerning the allegations which I had made in question period today, and the suggestion that he was not informed that he would be questioned on this matter today is completely without foundation.

**Madam Speaker:** That really is not a question of privilege, it is debate. I will not even allow the hon. member to respond. I do not recognize that as a question of privilege.

MR. CROSBIE—ALLEGED MISLEADING STATEMENT BY MR. CHRÉTIEN

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West):** Madam Speaker, my question of privilege relates to the answer given by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) yesterday.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Crosbie:** I refer to page—

**Madam Speaker:** Order. There is some disturbance behind the hon. member for St. John's West. I want to remind the hon. member for Annapolis Valley-Hants (Mr. Nowlan) that the hon. member for St. John's West had risen on a question of privilege just ahead of the hon. member and therefore I will recognize him in his turn. I recognize now the hon. member for St. John's West.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Madam Speaker, I refer to *Hansard* of yesterday at page 17533 and 17534 where the Minister of Justice, questioned by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) as to whether the federal government is considering a unilateral reference on offshore resource ownership to the Supreme Court of Canada, said:

—No decision has been made at this time.

On the next page, in response to a further question about a direct unilateral reference, he said:

Madam Speaker, I said that there has been no decision made by the government at this time on that question.

Madam Speaker, this morning a telex went from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to the Premier of Newfoundland informing him that a reference had been filed with the Supreme Court of Canada this morning putting to the Supreme Court of Canada a question, the whole question of offshore ownership of resources off the east coast of Newfoundland. The Minister of Justice himself flew to Newfoundland to make the same announcement at a press conference. Today we have heard from the Prime Minister that a decision was made by the cabinet of Canada yesterday morning.

**An hon. Member:** Deliberately misleading.

**Mr. Crosbie:** I do not care whether the decision was conditional or not. The decision was confirmed by order in council last night so that the Minister of Justice has deliberately, on a

most important matter, deliberately misled this House, deliberately.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Madam Speaker:** Order. I gather the hon. member is commenting on the way in which the hon. minister or the Right Hon. Prime Minister answered him yesterday and today in the House. I must say to the hon. member that answers of ministers in the House, if they do not satisfy the members, do not constitute a basis for a question of privilege. What the hon. member is doing until now is debating that question. That is his right, he may debate it, but he may debate it at another time and not under the guise of a question of privilege.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Madam Speaker, I am not debating the adequacy of the answer. I am saying that the privileges of members of this House have been affected by a minister deliberately misleading this House, and that is a breach of the privileges of this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Crosbie:** I do not care if he is in the House or not. He should not be, an outright liar who deceives the members of this House.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, order. I would like hon. members to try to be a bit less nervous. The only way to get through debate is to do it in an orderly fashion, and I would appreciate the co-operation of hon. members to do just that. Someone was speaking to me. Did I hear the hon. member say that someone had deliberately misled the House?

**An hon. Member:** You got it right!

**An hon. Member:** Remember Profumo!

**Madam Speaker:** That is quite unparliamentary. I am afraid I must ask the hon. member if he wants to confirm that. There are things that cannot be said in this manner, unless they are done under a substantive motion, to charge a member with deliberately misleading the House. I would ask the hon. member if he would withdraw those words.

**Hon. Eric Nielsen (Yukon):** Madam Speaker, I am sure you will want to consider the distinction between a difference in the subject matter of a debate and a charge that the minister has deliberately misled the House. If ever there was a question of privilege that was a substantive question of privilege, throughout the years in the House, it was the assertion by a member of the House that a minister of the Crown had deliberately misled the House. That is the substance of the question raised by the member for St. John's West. I would submit most strongly, Madam Speaker, that the Chair has an obligation when such an assertion is made that a minister of the Crown is deliberately misleading the House, and that it raises a very substantial question of privilege which must be