

Privilege—Mr. Fretz

made, probably some time tomorrow morning before the question period, I shall be pleased to advise him accordingly.

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[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. LAWRENCE—ALLEGED MISLEADING ANSWER GIVEN BY
MR. KAPLAN—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER

Madam Speaker: I should like to go back to the new question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence). He took great care to tell me what citations did not apply and he read Citation 19 from Beausnesne. There is another citation which I should like to put before hon. members in response to that question of privilege, namely, Citation 264 of Beausnesne, on page 87, which reads as follows:

The option of a minister to make a statement either in the House or outside it may be the subject of comment, but is not the subject of a question of privilege.

● (1730)

I remind hon. members of the ruling by Mr. Speaker Lamoureux on February 28, 1972, where he said:

—suggestions that statements not made in the House were made outside the House, or that information not given to members in reply to questions was supplied to the media or in some other way given outside the House. There is a long line of learned rulings, going back many years, indicating that this is more a grievance than a breach of privilege—

Therefore, I think I am on solid and traditional ground in ruling that the hon. member might have a grievance, that he might be hurt and disappointed by the fact that the question was not answered in the way he would have wished, but that the matter of privilege does not cover that kind of situation.

I have notice of another question of privilege.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Yes, I have others. I will call them in the order in which I have received them.

MR. FRETZ—ALLEGED UNSATISFACTORY ANSWER FROM
MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Madam Speaker, my question of privilege flows from answers which the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne) gave me in this House on Friday as a result of questions I posed to him. The answers were misleading and contradictory. I would like to read in part the questions and answers.

It concerns recent press reports that pressure from the Quebec Liberal caucus has caused bidding to be reopened on the contracts for the F-18 fighter—

I asked the minister if those allegations were correct. He replied:

The bidding has been going normally. Nothing has been changed on the international principle of the bidding... As far as I am concerned, nothing either illegal or erroneous has been done.

My next question was:

—if the minister alleges that the bids have not been reopened, what is the reason for the delays which constitute a loss of work for Canadian plants?

The minister replied:

—I would suggest that the hon. member ask McDonnell Douglas about the delays if any.

We have a confession by the chairman of the Quebec Liberal caucus. It was confirmed on Thursday that the Quebec Liberal caucus pressed the McDonnell Douglas firm to reopen bidding on the contracts months after the competition had closed, giving a Quebec firm a chance to bid late. McDonnell Douglas reopened bidding in February to consider what it called a late unsolicited bid from Canadair Limited of Montreal. In the original bidding period last year, Canadair had gone after only one of four contracts because it was busy with other work.

The chairman of the Quebec Liberal caucus said that his group met with the directors of Canadair a month and a half ago to force them to reconsider and submit bids on all the contracts. He stated that Canadair did not have any choice. The firms affected are in Ontario, Manitoba and New Brunswick. Sources close to the situation say that two Ontario firms would have won the contracts if the federal government had accepted McDonnell Douglas' first recommendation.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is well aware that if he is not satisfied with an answer received from a minister in the House, that does not constitute the basis of a question of privilege. The hon. member has been speaking now for a few minutes and has not yet stated what the question of privilege is. I would ask him to do that very promptly because my suspicion is that he does not have a question of privilege. I cannot deduce that from what he has said. He is debating the matter of the question of privilege, but he is not exposing or debating the privilege itself.

Since there are several other members who have given me notice of questions of privilege, I would ask the hon. member to be brief. In any event, he may have a long series of arguments to put forward. I cannot force him to be brief. I can ask him to come to the point very quickly.

Mr. Fretz: Madam Speaker, my question of privilege is that the minister said that the bidding has been going normally. My question of privilege is that it is not going normally. If bidding has been reopened as a result of pressure from the Liberal caucus—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. That is obviously a difference of opinion between the minister and the hon. member. It is debate. The hon. member has to tell me why he feels he has a question of privilege, not to debate anything pertaining to the specific question asked during the question period or any of the answers which were given. That does not constitute a question of privilege.

Mr. Fretz: Madam Speaker, the answer the minister gave me was that things were going normally. As we can see, they