

hearing of everybody—certainly it went out over the airwaves and I think is already on the wire service emanating from Ottawa—that the Solicitor General was going to do exactly that.

If that had not been his answer, I suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that the members of this House have been put in the very unfair position of being under the assumption that the agreement would be tabled. He now says again—another contradiction, one of many in this whole fiasco—that he misunderstood the question. I do not think that that is good enough. I think that the hon. minister has misled the House. It may not have been intentional, but nevertheless it is part of the whole sorry facade that we have been listening to in regard to this matter and I must object most strenuously to it.

Before I take my seat, may I point out that I have another question of privilege arising from the procedure witnessed in the House this afternoon.

Madam Speaker: I want to make sure that hon. members understand that this was a point of order and that both members have made their point. However, I am grateful to the hon. member for Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence) for making his remarks brief. I can see that he does not accept the point made by the hon. Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) and that is his privilege, but he has made his remarks brief and I think that should be an example to all members.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. LAWRENCE—PRIORITY OF QUESTIONS OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I rise on a completely separate question of privilege. It is on the matter of raising a question of privilege. I think it has been one of the guardians of parliamentary democracy that when the Chair or Table receives notice of a question of privilege, that question of privilege cuts like a hot knife through all other procedures of the House and all other business before the House. I am not talking about the phony facade of a public relations effort such as we have heard this afternoon.

Mr. Waddell: Oh, come on.

Mr. Lawrence: I am talking about a question of privilege taking priority over everything else. Madam Speaker, it is enshrined as one of the basic fundamentals of the procedures of the House. It is indicated very, very clearly in the rules and in every precedent and antecedent in connection with every Speaker in this House—and, as far as I know, every other House which has the British parliamentary system—that privilege takes priority over everything else.

● (1610)

You have mentioned, Madam Speaker, that on Thursday, through an arrangement with the House leaders, the tradition

is that we do not delay the House leaders; they are permitted to raise questions, not of government business but of House business. I suggest to Your Honour that even though this is 1982 and the year of metric reforms, as far as I know this is still Monday. As far as I know there was no prior arrangement made with Your Honour or with the members of this House relating to the business of this House. Therefore, I submit that unless Your Honour has some better alibi or excuse than we have heard so far—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lawrence: —we should get back to the rules and precedents of this House and stick to rule 81(1) as indicated on page 25 of *Beauchesne*.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I do have explanations to make to the hon. member which are completely in accordance with the rules of the House and the practices which have been accepted traditionally in this House.

Questions concerning government business are usually taken up on Thursdays, and they take precedence over questions of privilege through an arrangement made among the House leaders.

Mr. Lawrence: We had better change the rules.

Madam Speaker: Questions relating to government business do occur on other days of the week as well and are accepted immediately after the question period. That has been the practice ever since I have been here. Therefore, I have not derogated from that practice.

Prior to an arrangement made some time ago—I do not remember the date, but it was made during the time my predecessor was Speaker of the House—questions of privilege were sometimes raised during question period. Although the hon. member is right in saying that questions of privilege should cut through any debate taking place in the House of Commons like a hot knife, through an arrangement among all the House leaders questions of privilege, which previously were usually accepted during question period, were delayed until after the question period; and since there is an arrangement concerning government business, questions of privilege are taken after government business. That is what I intend to do.

MR. DEANS—APPOINTMENT OF SENATOR TO CABINET—LACK OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to raise a matter which I consider to be a question of privilege and to put it before Your Honour for your consideration.

At the outset I want to say that when Your Honour recognized me some time ago on this matter of privilege, I asked permission to raise a question with the House leader, and that permission was given by the Chair with the concurrence of the House; so therefore I assumed there was unanimous consent to do that.