

Inquiries of the Ministry

questions. I have tried to recognize some hon. members in the other rows and I will try to give others who might have been recognized an opportunity tomorrow to ask their questions. There is a request by the Minister of Labour that by unanimous consent we revert to motions to allow him to make the statement to which he has referred. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Before we do that, I recognize the hon. member for Sainte-Marie who wishes to raise a question of privilege.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege at this time because I waited until the question period was over so that I would not delay hon. members who wanted to put questions.

My question of privilege deals with an answer the Prime Minister gave me yesterday when I put a question to him in connection with the problem raised during the question period, and I quote, from page 10453 of *Hansard*, what he said:

No, Mr. Speaker, there will be no special regulation. The act is known to this House for it was passed by this House. The government intends to announce very soon the regulations under this act. They are clear and known to everyone, including the government of the province of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, this contradicts the comments made by the Minister of Labour a while ago to the effect that the act contains some ambiguities and that he had to clarify the situation.

I maintain that the Prime Minister gave a false and incorrect answer yesterday and that the minister is again attempting to clarify the problem and enable the province of Quebec to take its own responsibilities. In my opinion, the minister should have been invited to make such a statement at the beginning of—not after—the oral question period.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister who is entitled, if he so wishes, to reply to the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Sainte-Marie, but I am prepared to allow the Prime Minister to do so.

I would, however, remind hon. members that to question an answer given by a minister during the question period does not constitute a question of privilege.

I refer hon. members to Citation 181 of Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, fourth edition. I could invoke this citation every day when hon. members rise on a question of privilege in order to question an answer that was given to them. I suggest that what is taking place now is a debate between two hon. members, and the question should not be referred to the Chair under cover of a question of parliamentary privilege.

[*English*]

Mr. Dinsdale: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have been endeavouring to catch Your Honour's eye for the past half hour.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dinsdale: I have not had the privilege of asking a question since last Friday and I have an important question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. He has now departed and he will not be here tomorrow. I do not know how to handle the matter. It involves a question of vital importance to institutions in national parks such as the Banff School of Fine Arts. Perhaps I could have Your Honour's permission to present it as notice to the minister.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must say, speaking very honestly, that I am always a bit surprised when I hear hon. members say they have not had an opportunity to ask a very important question on a very important matter. During the question period hon. members are given an opportunity to ask questions, but the purpose of the question period is to seek information. I sincerely feel there must be other ways for members to seek information than to ask a question during the 40 minutes allowed them for the question period. The Chair is in the hands of hon. members. We can continue the question period for a longer time by unanimous consent of the House. Otherwise, when the question period has ended the Chair has no other alternative but to call orders of the day. Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member for Brandon-Souris to ask his question?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. However, I will tell the hon. member that he caught the Speaker's eye. I shall certainly make it my duty to see that he is recognized at the first opportunity and given priority over other members.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The Prime Minister raises a question of privilege.

Mr. Trudeau: I would not want to complicate your task, Mr. Speaker, but I did not quite understand your ruling. I understood that you allowed me to comment on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member, even though it was not well founded.

I just want to say, if you do not want to allow me to give further explanations, that we are prepared to revert to motions, provided the opposition agrees, to enable the Minister of Labour to read these regulations which—as I was saying yesterday—are clear for everyone. However, the minister must be allowed to move them.

[*English*]

Mr. MacInnis: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.