

Privilege—Mr. Fulton

In his presentation, the member referred to a number of questions and answers in the House which started back in July, 1980, and which he pursued until February of this year. It is obviously an important matter, one which is of great interest to him. The fact that he also raised it during the adjournment proceedings and twice as a question of privilege is a clear demonstration of his concern. I am sure the House has noted that.

Essentially, the hon. member for Skeena is taking objection to a certain permit granted to Amax Ltd. which, in his view, does not comply with the provisions of the Fisheries Act and, consequently, he asked for a public inquiry into the matter.

The hon. member for Skeena claims that he has been misled by the ministers who gave him conflicting information in answer to his questions. He raised a question of privilege to this effect on January 23, after the hon. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) had told him that:

—a panel of experts has been set up to look into the matter, notice of which has been communicated to the Nishga tribal chief, Mr. Gosnell.

The hon. member stated then:

I have taken the time to check, and in fact no panel has been set up, and no notice has been communicated to Mr. James Gosnell, president and chief of the Nishga Tribal Council.

In an effort to clarify the matter, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development said:

Subject to checking, it was my information that the scientific panel was constituted. It may be in the process of being constituted, which is apparently at variance with what was said yesterday.

It seems to me that the hon. member for Skeena followed the appropriate course of action open to him in order to deal with his concern when he asked questions during question period and followed them up with an adjournment debate. Obviously, he is not satisfied with the answers given to him by the ministers, but the Chair is not in a position to insist on any other answer nor to comment on the quality or the substance of such answers. The hon. member has expressed his dissatisfaction by way of a question of privilege, but he has not persuaded the Chair that his privileges as a member of this House have been breached. What he has established, however, is a difference of opinion between himself and certain ministers of the Crown as to the interpretation of certain facts. I hardly need to refer hon. members to Citation 19(1) of the fifth edition of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, which reads as follows:

A dispute arising between two members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

I therefore rule that, in this instance, a prima facie case of privilege has not been established.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**MOTION RESPECTING STUDY OF OPERATIONS OF NORTHERN CANADA POWER COMMISSION**

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, there is an agreement I forgot to mention. It is very short. After consultation with my colleagues it is agreed:

That the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development be empowered to study any aspects of the operations of the Northern Canada Power Commission;

That it be an instruction to the committee that it appoint a subcommittee for the aforementioned purpose;

That the subcommittee be empowered to adjourn from place to place within Canada; and

That the subcommittee be empowered to employ expert and technical staff that shall be authorized to accompany the subcommittee.

Madam Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

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PRIVILEGE**MR. COSGROVE—QUESTION ASKED BY MR. BROADBENT RESPECTING RENT CONTROLS**

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I served written notice of my intention to raise a question of privilege this afternoon. It is my first opportunity to address the matter since returning to the House from a trip to British Columbia. It arises out of a question addressed to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) by the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), the Leader of the New Democratic Party, on March 3. His words were as follows:

Yesterday the minister responsible for housing was in Toronto giving the government of Ontario some advice on rent controls. At that time he said that the government of Ontario should get rid of rent controls.

I have three points I would like to bring to your attention, Madam Speaker. As I have indicated, I was not in Toronto on that day; I was in British Columbia, in the city of Vancouver. Second, at no time did I give advice to the government, any member, or any servant of the government of Ontario on the matter of rent controls. Third, the information provided to the hon. member in preparation for his question probably arose from a newspaper report published in Toronto.

Finally, I would like to indicate that, contrary to that report, it is not my intention to address the question of rent controls at the national housing conference this weekend. It never was my intention to do so, it is not my intention to do so and it will not be my practice. I am there to listen.

I have indicated three reasons why I have raised this matter, Madam Speaker. If the Chair recognizes that there is a prima facie case of privilege, I would be pleased to provide the appropriate motion complaining of the same.