

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 3, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for York Centre rises on a question of privilege. Before I hear him I perhaps would like to consider the situation.

Because of the courtesy of the hon. member for York Centre a few minutes ago, he gave some indication that he wished to raise a question of privilege. There may be time later in the day to raise it, but I am looking at the order, and that is what I am bound by.

I have to ask the hon. member, is it something that is arising out of proceedings in the Chamber during the course of a sitting? If it is not, I will have to ask the hon. member to go through the usual motions, and give an hour's notice.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to be straightforward about this and ask unanimous consent to raise my question of privilege now rather than raising it at a time which would delay the introduction and first reading of a bill the government has given notice of its intention to proceed with at noon. I can wait until noon, but I think it might be more in the interests of the House that I be able to do it now, and it will not be long.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair wants to co-operate with members. The hon. member has asked for consent, but the members that he is asking the consent of have no idea of what it is the hon. member is raising. I think I have to say at the moment that the application is premature. As a consequence of discussion, the hon. member may be able to obtain that consent, and then of

course I am in the hands of the House. The hon. member for York Centre.

• (1010)

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, it had to do with a deliberate interference by an official of the Federal Business Development Bank with the delivery of documents to me which the corporation had agreed to provide me and which it began providing me with yesterday. They were documents which I had phoned the RCMP about. I told them that I would be giving these documents to them between four-thirty and five o'clock. However, they were not made available. I would briefly like to explain the circumstances and indicate that my privileges were affected.

Mr. Speaker: I am bound as your Speaker to follow the rules. I have to say to the hon. member for York Centre that perhaps if he has discussions and if events change then of course the Chair would hear him further. For other members and for the public that is watching, I cannot help but hear a discussion that is going on among members. That is a discussion that members will need to have. I am bound by the rules.

Mr. Kaplan: May I seek unanimous consent to deal with the question of privilege now?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for York Centre has asked the Chair if he could seek unanimous consent. I, of course, am prepared to listen to the Hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in view of the comments of my hon. friend, I now understand a little better what he is driving at. I think it might be in the interest of the House and the business of the day to briefly address the question of privilege, but we do have only a short time between now and eleven o'clock. If he can address it briefly, that might assist everybody.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The House has agreed that the hon. member for York Centre be permitted to raise the question of privilege and I will hear the hon. member for York Centre.