

Routine Proceedings

nesses, especially the former Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to your ruling in this matter and I trust that you will come to the right conclusion.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): I have nothing to add, Mr. Speaker. I clearly related everything that happened during Question Period. There can be differences of opinion between one side of the House and the other. It is a matter for debate and not a substantive issue.

I admitted earlier that I talked about this with Mr. Mulroney. I said it clearly, and he confirmed to me that he would send a letter to make things as clear as possible. Read the letter and you will see. He explained to me what had happened and I said that I would wait for his written reply before stating that I was happy with all the answers. I took every precaution to protect the public interest by ensuring that there were other witnesses.

I am being criticized for being overly cautious. It is a matter for debate. Perhaps I should have been careless. Perhaps in the future I should follow the hon. member's advice of not thinking things through before acting, as the Bloc Québécois would like me to do. I did everything not to embarrass anyone and give half-answers because in a conversation like this we talk about many things. As I see it, I said that I had not received Mr. Mulroney's answer because he told me he would send a written reply. I preferred to rely on his written answer rather than on a verbal discussion. That is what I clearly said here in this House. I was waiting for his final answer, which arrived within 48 hours as promised.

[English]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, a motion has been moved by the hon. member and I believe it is my duty to speak to the motion that the member has indicated he is willing to introduce.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you—

The Speaker: The Chair has not heard a motion. One moment, please.

If the hon. member wishes to enter into this exchange it should be on the point of privilege because there is no motion before the House.

Mr. Boudria: That is exactly the point. I was indicating the fact there is no point of privilege in my estimation based on citation 31(1) of Beauchesne's which states:

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

Therefore, the member indicates that he wishes to put a motion, if you deem that there is a prima facie case of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I submit that there is not such a prima facie case of privilege because of 31(1) of Beauchesne's 6th edition.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I leave this to you to decide, having pointed out what I see as a breach of my colleague, the opposition leader's privilege. It is from that angle that the Prime Minister's answer should be considered and absolutely not within the context outlined by the government whip.

With all due respect, I would like to rise again on a question of privilege and repeat my argument that the Official Opposition's work has been undermined by an answer which was clearly inaccurate.

• (1210)

[English]

The Speaker: The seriousness of this point of privilege cannot be lost on anyone in the House. I want to be absolutely sure in my own mind and I want to take some time. I want to review everything that has been said and I want to reflect on it. I take it all of the submissions have been made.

I would ask the indulgence of the House. I will consider all matters that were brought forward and I will return to the House, if necessary or when necessary, and give my judgment on this request.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to two petitions.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 35th and 36th reports of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Both are regarding membership of committees.

The 35th report is a comprehensive report dealing with membership in the committees. The 36th report is one that deals with the appointment of associate members to the committees.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in both these reports.