

*Privilege—Mr. Oberle***PRIVILEGE**

MR. LEWIS—NOTICE OF QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that you have undertaken to investigate the matter of the security police in this House last evening, or earlier this morning, I am content that my question of privilege stand down until you have had an opportunity to report to this House.

MR. OBERLE—STATEMENTS MADE BY MR. MACEACHEN

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question of privilege is with regard to references that were made in the course of the question period earlier today by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) in response to a question by the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay). I am very concerned about the matter, as I am sure the Chair will be, because the two members involved, particularly the Deputy Prime Minister, calculate their words very carefully. The Deputy Prime Minister, as we know, is always very deliberate in his statements.

Why I am concerned and why I feel that I have a question of privilege is because I think that I clearly understood the Deputy Prime Minister to say that there were discussions between the House leader of the official opposition and the government House leader with respect to extended hours and extended days on the constitutional debate. I do not have the blues, but I intend to check them. Certainly it is misleading of the facts as they were told to me by my House leader.

This is not the usual debate. Members in this chamber were glued to their chairs and were glued to every word that was uttered in this House by members on both sides. It is a debate that will fundamentally and ultimately change the way of life of Canadians, the relationships between individuals and minority groups with their governments and with their state. We were all in the chamber.

The Deputy Prime Minister knew full well that even to suggest that there was an offer of extended hours was utter nonsense because, even though the government planned through entrenchment of rights, to do certain things that are nothing more than a utopian dream, such as to eliminate discrimination all at once, they will not be able with this measure to extend the hours of the day which are 24 for members of Parliament and every other citizen of this country.

● (1230)

We were in this chamber from two o'clock in the afternoon until ten o'clock at night, every day. There was just no way that a member could do his work in his office and discharge his responsibilities to his constituents in the time allowed. A member cannot sit in this chamber 24 hours a day; there are other things that have to be done, so that was nonsense because the Deputy Prime Minister knew this. When he said there was an offer to extend the days, that was misleading the House. It could leave the impression throughout the country

that this party was not co-operative. I want to be very sure that the Deputy Prime Minister was not being deliberate when he said this. I am concerned because, as I have said, the minister is usually very calculated and very deliberate in all he says.

There was no opportunity for members of this House—as you know, Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity. I was one of 17 members of the official opposition who had the opportunity to speak, but all the rest of my colleagues did not.

It is not in the interests of restoring order, respect and decorum in this House, for the Deputy Prime Minister to make statements which are obviously misleading and, I will not at this moment use the word “deliberate” but I shall reserve the right to do so once I have had the opportunity to examine the blues.

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): On that point, Madam Speaker, I presume the hon. member, if he was not mistaken altogether, was really alluding to the Deputy Prime Minister and not to the leader of the government; since he was looking at me while speaking, he may have mistaken one for the other. Be that as it may, I was here when the Deputy Prime Minister answered the question and I myself had to answer some of the questions on the matter; I want that to be very clear.

No one on this side of the House said that extra days had been offered to the opposition for the first stage. What the Deputy Prime Minister said was that we would be willing to negotiate for the third stage; I said the same thing, that is we would be willing to extend the hours and, if need be, allow extra. But when my learned colleague refers to the offer made for the first stage, which ended during the night, then, as we said, and I call upon the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) to vouch for it, since those proposals were made to each of the respective caucuses of the three parties—in fact, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre made the proposal himself—to allow the House to sit yesterday, Thursday, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and from 10 p.m. till midnight, then all day Friday, that is today, during normal hours, Monday at dinner time from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and 10 till midnight, provided the vote on the motion passed last night, was taken Tuesday afternoon, before the budget speech. That is exactly what the proposal entailed that was made at the meeting of the House leaders and which we agreed would be submitted to our respective caucuses. Obviously, the NDP accepted the proposal. It came from them. We, on our side of the House, were also willing to accept it. It was the Tories who refused it. Those are the facts, I hope that can satisfy and placate my learned colleague; that is what we said and I cannot believe the Deputy Prime Minister would say anything different with regard to the first stage.

When the Deputy Prime Minister spoke of extra days, it was in terms of the third stage; he said that we would be willing to