

Points of Order

In this letter the Prime Minister stated that Canada requires a first rate transportation system that is able to serve every region. He also stated that the PC government's continued tolerance to rail line abandonment had done nothing to improve the situation. He stated that the Liberal Party, if elected, would clean up this mess.

• (1500)

The Minister of Transport has stated that he cannot answer my call because he has 175 Liberal calls to answer first. In view of that fact, could the Prime Minister intercede and make sure that after December 15 the people in Saint John have a dayliner to Moncton instead of a bus as promised by the Minister of Transport?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the hon. member for Saint John, I have been into her beautiful city on at least four or five occasions to meet with people who have concerns about the transportation system there.

I want to say to the hon. member that we are going to do everything we can to continue to provide services to Saint John and all other parts of the country. However, what we need to hear are some solutions and proposals that make a lot more sense than what was done over the last nine years by the party that she represents.

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PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Mr. Jorma Huuhtanen, Minister of Social Affairs and Health from Helsinki, Finland.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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PRIVILEGE**COMMENTS IN QUESTION PERIOD**

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Yesterday in this Chamber the Deputy Prime Minister quoted from a letter I wrote to the Minister of Canadian Heritage regarding the concern of one of my constituents without my prior knowledge or permission or the prior knowledge or permission of my constituent.

Mr. Speaker, in your deliberations as to whether what I raise today constitutes a prima facie question of privilege, I ask that you consider the following. Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 115 reads:

A question of privilege must be brought to the attention of the House at the first possible opportunity.

Because breaching the right of a member of Parliament is a serious matter, before taking it any further I undertook to obtain the transcript record of what transpired yesterday. I also undertook to consult the legal counsel of the House regarding what had occurred.

The Deputy Prime Minister and by making the aforesaid letter available to her the Minister of Canadian Heritage breached confidentiality and in so doing interfered with my ability to function as a member of Parliament.

By breaching confidentiality the minister has called into question whether or not issues on which my constituents ask my assistance will be made public.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to find this to be a prima facie question of privilege. If you do so find, as is the usual practice of this House as described in Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 118, I will move that this question of privilege be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the letters were part of the public record of the CRTC.

The Speaker: I also will avail myself of the transcript of what was said yesterday and I will seek advice. I will do research on it and if necessary I will come back to the House with my decision at the earliest time.

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POINTS OF ORDER**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been rising in my place for the last two days trying to get the floor.

An hon. member: It is good exercise.

Mr. Blaikie: I have been getting the kind of exercise somebody else was referring to earlier only I have been getting more of it than I want.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall an argument I made to you earlier in this session. I argued that the NDP caucus should be entitled according to the mathematics of the opposition to at least a question and a supplementary and a statement each day. We have not come anywhere near that.

• (1505)

This week we have only had two statements. I have to say that I think the treatment of the NDP caucus in this Parliament by you is abominable.

The Speaker: Every day in Question Period I attempt to see that according to the approximate proportion each party has that they get a chance to put questions. It is not always possible in