

[English]

## PRIVILEGE

MR. MCKINNON—ALLEGATION MINISTER MISLED HOUSE  
CONCERNING ADMIRAL BOYLE'S RESIGNATION—RULING BY  
MR. SPEAKER

**Mr. Speaker:** Yesterday the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) returned to a question of privilege which he had raised earlier and had deferred in order to give the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Danson) an opportunity to participate. Yesterday the Minister of National Defence was in the House and both members participated in the question of privilege which had been raised by the hon. member for Victoria.

The foundation of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Victoria, were it accepted as a question of privilege, would be the action of the minister in misleading the House in a response he had made earlier to a question concerning the resignation of Admiral Boyle from the national defence service. Yesterday the minister indicated that as a result of the question raised by the hon. member for Victoria he had reviewed his files, and reaffirmed to the House the position he had taken earlier.

Therefore, there could scarcely be a question of any attempt, innocent or otherwise, to mislead the House. Obviously, what is at issue is a description given by the minister yesterday that one impression was taken by the admiral and a similar impression taken by the hon. member for Victoria, which are different from the impression of the circumstances taken by the minister. Obviously, that gives rise to a difference of opinion which, of course, does not fall within the bounds of a question of privilege.

MR. BALDWIN—ALLEGED ATTEMPT BY GOVERNMENT TO  
INTERFERE WITH NEWS MEDIA

**Mr. Speaker:** Yesterday, attention was drawn to a possible question of privilege by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). Part of the foundation was an article referring to certain remarks made by the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Mr. Joyal). Other references were made to actions or alleged actions taken by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) who was not in the House yesterday. I had indicated that it would be appropriate, certainly so far as those members who wished to contribute to the question and make reference to the actions or alleged actions of the Minister of Transport were concerned, that this should await his presence. I see the minister here.

So far as the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont is concerned, it does not seem to me that he is put on the defensive in the sense of being accused of anything in respect of these questions. I observe that the hon. member is not here today. There has been some indirect information to the effect that perhaps there is some explanation for this absence, but in the circumstances I wonder whether it would not be appropriate for those members who are here today and who wish to participate in the discussion to do so. Unless I hear during the course of their remarks some reason to defer until the hon.

## Privilege—Mr. Baldwin

member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont is present, I would prefer to have them make their contributions now. Then probably I would stand the matter over until the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont is in the House, unless there is some reason to behave differently.

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Mr. Joyal) telephoned me about two hours ago. He is engaged in a court action in the province of Quebec, I believe in connection with the Air Canada issue. I think he is most anxious to make some comments. There is a separation between the allegations with respect to him upon which a question of privilege might be founded, and the situation relating to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). They are quite separable. Since the Minister of Transport is here, as are others who wish to comment, it may be that the Chair might feel disposed to proceed and hear the discussion. The hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont did ask me to indicate to the House and to the Chair that he would appreciate the opportunity to enlarge upon the comments he has made, which he is most anxious to do in this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Then I think I will proceed with the course of action I have outlined and continue with the comments, unless I see some reason to interrupt them on the basis of fairness to the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont.

**Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset I should like to stress the fact that the most basic duty of parliament is the protection of our freedoms, not the least of which is freedom of the press; in other words, to protect the right of fair comment by the press on all matters whatsoever, including comments on members of this House or members of the cabinet.

Last weekend the *Canadian* magazine failed to appear in the province of Saskatchewan, directly because distribution was withheld by two newspapers which carry the supplement in that province. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the editor of the *Canadian* magazine, in an open-line radio program yesterday which subsequently has been quoted extensively in the news media, stated that he was advised by lawyers of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) on Friday, June 3, at 6 p.m., that legal action would follow if the *Canadian* magazine appeared. He further stated that he had sought legal advice and was told that if the article's facts were correct there were no grounds for libel; and since he believed the facts to be correct the decision was made to publish.

I also draw attention to the fact that Mr. M. C. Sifton, president of the company which carries the *Canadian* magazine in Saskatchewan and which failed to carry the article in that particular issue, has been widely quoted as using these words: "The straw that broke the camel's back was when we were threatened by a legal suit for defamation. Quite frankly, we would just as soon not find ourselves in that position".

It seems to me that there is, therefore, apparently a possible attempt to prevent publication and subsequent distribution of