

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): On the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. First I would point out that the Minister rose to attack my colleague from Montreal—Sainte-Marie in his absence, which is somewhat unusual.

Second, I would draw the attention of the Chair to the fact that the Minister made a general attack without indicating in any way whatever the specific words which, in his opinion, my colleague allegedly used to insult him. I would suggest that the Chair ought not to accept that general accusations be made without specifying what they are all about; this has never been done.

[English]

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in direct reply to my colleague's suggestion that a question of privilege cannot be raised when a Member is not in the Chamber, the Hon. Minister raised the question of privilege at the first available opportunity. If my friend's point is valid, then a question of privilege on items which take place in Question Period could simply be avoided by leaving the Chamber. I think the Minister has done the correct thing.

Waiting until the "blues" are available or until the other Member is available for comment are other ways of handling the matter. However, I do not think it should be thrown out simply because the Hon. Member for Montreal—Saint-Marie (Mr. Malépart) has left the Chamber.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member raised an important point, a complaint concerning the language used by the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart). Unfortunately it was impossible for the Chair to hear clearly the words which are the subject of the complaint, but naturally when the Minister and, I think, a few other Members have heard a few words which obviously gave rise to this question, consequently—

[English]

Perhaps I can review the "blues", and if I think it is necessary and, in the interests of fairness, I would, of course, hear the Hon. Member for Montreal—Saint-Marie. Perhaps for now Hon. Members will let the Chair review the "blues". I will return to the House at an appropriate moment.

I would like to bring to the attention of the House the fact that I have received a notice of a question of privilege from the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan). I understand that the Parliamentary Secretary will have an intervention to make, which may prove helpful. I will now hear the Hon. Member.

Privilege

PRIVILEGE

INACCURATE INFORMATION IN ANSWER TO QUESTION ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is with respect to a question on the Order Paper which was answered yesterday. I refer to Question No. 95 in the name of the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton). The question reads:

For the period September 4, 1984 to March 4, 1987, did Members of Parliament travel outside of Canada at the expense, in whole or in part, of any department of the Government of Canada and, if so, for each Member and each trip what was the (a) sponsoring department (b) purpose (c) destination (d) cost?

• (1510)

Included in this answer, Mr. Speaker, is an expense item listed in my name, in relation to my attendance at the Forty-First Session of the United Nations General Assembly, in the amount of \$25,721.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

An Hon. Member: A typical "liberal" spender.

An Hon. Member: One would think he was the Prime Minister, spending that amount of money!

Mr. MacLellan: I would like to think that the Government would provide me with that amount of money for one week; but, I can assure you, if I spent that amount of money for a one-week trip, I would have to get my closets expanded.

While I can laugh about this matter now, it was not very funny this morning when it was flashed across the country as the lead news item. It caused great concern to myself, my family, and my constituents.

My office telephoned the Department of External Affairs regarding this, and the response received was, "Oh, well, that's too bad. Evidently, your name was confused with that of another Member, who had attributed to him expenditures totalling \$25,720." But even in the confusion there was still attributed to me \$1 more than that attributed to the other Member.

It is a very serious matter, Mr. Speaker, when this type of erroneous information is allowed to slip through. It can do nothing but cause problems for the credibility of Members of Parliament, in addition to causing embarrassment to Hon. Members, their families, and their constituents. Some tightening up in respect of the compilation and dissemination of this information is required.

I do not disagree for a moment with the right of Members of Parliament to have this information, or the right of the press or the Canadian public. All I ask is that the right information be brought forward.