

*Privilege***CONTRAVENTIONS ACT**

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

When the minister spoke to constituents in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka last summer he assured them a boating infraction ticketing procedure would be in place by June of this year to protect boaters on waterways in my riding and across the country.

What plan does the minister have to effectively enforce boating regulations on Canadian waterways this summer?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I well remember the delightful day I spent in the hon. member's riding last June. I remember the very pleasant meeting I had with the Muskoka Lakes Boating Association. I also recall that we discussed the Contraventions Act which is a statute passed in October 1992 by Parliament but not yet proclaimed in force.

The idea behind the Contraventions Act is to permit the enforcement of federal statutes by a ticketing scheme administered by officials at all levels of government.

We had hoped that statute would be proclaimed in force this month but through discussions with the provinces we have found that changes to the statute will be necessary in order for us to take advantage of the provincial contraventions procedures and save the taxpayers money. Therefore it will not come into force this June.

I can say that officials of the federal Department of Transport are in discussions with provincial authorities to see that there is effective supervision and enforcement on lakes this summer so safety of boaters is assured in the meantime.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, I wish to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of Thomas Mitsios, member of Parliament from the Republic of Albania.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Colleagues, before the business question for Thursday I have notice of a point of privilege from the hon. member for Kootenay East.

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PRIVILEGE**QUESTION PERIOD**

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Never before have the rights—

The Speaker: So that I understand, is the hon. member rising on a point of order or a point of privilege? Would he please indicate.

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, it is my error. I rise on a point of privilege.

Never before have the rights of members been so blatantly abused as they were today. A question was asked that went directly to the administration of government concerning the awarding of legal contracts for acting crown prosecutors. While I accept the fact that the allegations of patronage in the awarding—

The Speaker: Colleagues, I hope the hon. member for Kootenay East will weigh very carefully the words he is using. I believe from the words he has used the hon. member is questioning a decision taken by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

When the hon. member uses such words it calls into question not only the decision of the Speaker but also all of the House itself, as embodied in me are the rights and privileges of all members of this House.

That the hon. member is frustrated because his question was ruled out of order is to me understandable. The House has empowered me to make rulings such as these. The rulings I make are never taken frivolously and never taken to give advantage to one side or the other. My sole duty here is to see that the rights and privileges of all parliamentarians are adhered to and respected. That is what I try to do in this chair.

• (1505)

When the hon. member stood for his first question, I judged in that particular case he was referring to party matters. I permitted the hon. member to rephrase his question, which he did. In my judgment the question of the hon. member was in order and therefore I permitted it.

When the hon. member used words in the second question which I thought were leading down the same path as the first, I intervened.

I appeal to the hon. member who is standing on this point of privilege to please take into consideration the great weight that his words have in here. If the judgment of the Speaker is to be called into question, surely it is not because he is not being—excuse me if I do not use the right word here—responsible. But if the hon. member would like to speak with me in my chambers, I would be very happy to speak with him.

My judgment on that particular question stands. I would appeal to all hon. members to cease and desist now on this point of privilege because you are attacking your Speaker. In my view, I do not know that we can long operate like this.

I would appeal to the hon. member that if he wishes to speak to me I would more than gladly entertain him in my chambers.