

it is the only government business which remains, as far as the government is concerned—we should revert to motions for the purpose of putting the motion for the adjournment of the House later this day?

Mr. Speaker: It has been proposed by the President of the Privy Council that the House revert to motions later in the day. However, the terminology leaves a number of open-ended factors. First of all, it is conditional upon the passage of a bill and, second, no time is specified. I am not at all sure it is possible for the House to make an order with both these factors unresolved. Perhaps the House could simply indicate that it agrees in principle that the President of the Privy Council might return to the House at a later hour, under other conditions, and apply to the House at that time for permission to revert to motions; the House having given its agreement in principle at this time would not then interfere with the intentions of the President of the Privy Council.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We agree to that, Mr. Speaker. I would point out that the manner in which the government House leader put forward his proposition reminded us of what happens to us when we ask hypothetical questions.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Is that consensus of intention agreeable to all members?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. REID—NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ALLEGING NOVEMBER BUDGET LEAK

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, there are two points I wish to make at this time. The first is that I have instructed legal counsel to take all appropriate action against the *Montreal Gazette* as a result of the statements which were published yesterday and the lack of an adequate retraction. I have also asked that the same action be applied to *La Presse* of Montreal which carried a verbatim translation of the article which appeared in the *Gazette* of yesterday morning.

The second point I wish to make is that I have been informed, through my office, that Mr. Nelson of Kenora informed my office that the only communication he had with Outboard Marine Corporation concerning this tax was that he sent the sales manager a copy of my letter to him on December 19.

These are the only two points I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, in addition to what I said yesterday. I am prepared to hear your decision and abide by it. If you find there is a prima facie case of privilege, personal privilege in my case, I have a motion which I would be prepared to move.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps before making a decision I might hear the terms of the hon. member's proposed motion.

Privilege

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, the motion I would move is as follows:

That all articles contained in the July 24, 25 and any subsequent editions of the *Montreal Gazette* relating to the conduct of the member for Kenora-Rainy River vis-à-vis the November 18 budget, including most especially the allegations that the said member had advance knowledge of the said budget and conveyed that knowledge to businessmen, and the discrepancy in the editing of the *Gazette's* purported transcript of the proceedings of this House as compared to the report in the House of Commons Debates for yesterday be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I might, in passing, express some concern about the words "and subsequent editions" because it might appear that we are dealing today with events which could take place on an unending basis. However, I asked the hon. member to read the motion in order that I might have some guidance as to the precise matter which he wanted to have referred to the committee. There are other members who have given the Chair notice, and I take it they ought to be given an opportunity to develop his own question of privilege or to comment on the one which is before the House before I try to make a decision.

● (1210)

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, we believe that this is a bigger question than the simple one whether the parliamentary secretary has a matter of personal privilege that should or should not be referred to the standing committee. I note that the parliamentary secretary indicated that he intends to take legal action against the two newspapers to which he has referred. However, I would point out that perhaps that confirms the fact that not only in most members' minds, but also in the mind of the parliamentary secretary, the *Gazette* did not withdraw or retract in a substantial way the version in their report which appeared on July 24. I say that because I would draw to the attention of hon. members the statements made in this House yesterday by the parliamentary secretary, as reported at page 7887 of *Hansard*. He said:

I have asked the *Gazette* to publish a retraction and apology. If they fail to do so, I can only conclude that it was malicious. If there was malicious intent, then there are serious implications for all members of this House—

He continued:

—if the *Gazette* refuses to make a retraction tomorrow, and thereby makes it clear that this false and misleading story was published as a result of conscious and malicious intent... I would propose then to move—

He then recited his proposed motion. I think I should be put on the record exactly what the *Gazette* said in their editorial today. Under an editorial headed "Yes, but..." the editorial reads:

John Reid, Liberal MP for Kenora-Rainy River and Parliamentary Secretary to Privy Council President Mitchell Sharp, disclosed advance information not about last November's budget itself but about a later amendment to the budget.

The editorial continues:

The divulgence of inside information on tax change prior to public announcement is, however, just as serious whether that tax change is included in the budget or in an amendment.

From reading the statement of the parliamentary secretary and the apology that appears in the editorial of the *Gazette*, I believe it is clear that there has been no retrac-