

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, may I raise a question of privilege?

Mr. Speaker: Is this on the same question of privilege? Otherwise I will have to wait until the first one is finished.

Mr. Malépart: It is on the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart).

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to raise a question of privilege, considering it is my duty and my right as a Member of this House to represent the constituents of the riding of Montreal-Sainte-Marie to the best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker, employees of the Department of Employment and Immigration confirmed to me, on the telephone, that departmental employees are not allowed to give any information to any Member of the House. I am raising a question of privilege not because the instructions issued by the Minister are an infringement on the rights of public servants and project sponsors, but because they infringe on the privilege of Members of this House. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question because the instructions issued by the Minister are aimed directly at parliamentarians, at all Members of this House, and these guidelines are aimed at all Members as far as Quebec is concerned, whatever their party affiliation. I think it is very important to protect the privilege of Members who are here in the House to defend the interests of their constituents, and I also think the Minister should be asked to withdraw these instructions.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I thank all Hon. Members for their contributions. I think it has been recognized many times in the House that a complaint about the actions or inactions of government Departments cannot constitute a question of parliamentary privilege. By saying that, I do not want to diminish the nature of the complaint or the seriousness which Members apply to what they believe to be a legitimate grievance.

I must say that I was intrigued by the suggestion of the Hon. Member for Sudbury that somehow I had the capacity to instruct or control a Minister. I seem to be having enough trouble with Members of the House. I appreciate the goodwill which was included in the suggestion.

I believe Hon. Members know that the purpose of parliamentary privilege is to protect our speech in the House, the institution itself, and the institution and Members from threats, obstructions and intimidations in the exercise of our duties. The Hon. Member clearly has a complaint on a matter which concerns him, as well as other Members, with regard to the actions of a government Department.

Point of Order—Mr. Gray (Windsor West)

Mr. Frith: Opposition Members are not being allowed information.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member is saying something which he did not say for the record. When the Hon. Member spoke for the record he said the complaint had to do with a refusal with regard to all Members. In any event, this is a matter which involves a government Department. There are remedies available for that. I suggest, therefore, that I would have great difficulty in finding this matter to be within the realm of parliamentary privilege. I appreciate the sincerity with which his view is held.

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POINT OF ORDER

NOTICE OF MOTION—STANDING ORDER 82

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order regarding today's Order Paper. The Government has given notice of a motion which it purports to be pursuant to Standing Order 82, and has given 48 hours' notice under Government Notices of Motions. That means that when Government Notices of Motions are reached on Thursday, May 16, this motion will be transferred to Government Orders. It could be called at the Government's will, including eleven o'clock on a Monday, Tuesday or Thursday morning.

On every previous occasion when Standing Order 82, formerly Standing Order 75(c), was applied, the motion had been proposed on Motions during Routine Proceedings. In accordance with Standing Order 82, notice has been given orally by a Minister from his place in the House and has been moved pursuant to Standing Order 36(1)(p) on Routine Proceedings. When the debate on the time allocation motion has had to be interrupted or adjourned before the debate was concluded or terminated, that is before the maximum two-hour limit had been reached, and only in these cases, further consideration of the motion has been transferred to Government Orders pursuant to Standing Order 49(2).

● (1510)

Nothing has ever prevented the Government from supplementing the required oral notice with a written Notice of Motion to be printed on the Order Paper in the appropriate place. In the case of a Motion pursuant to Standing Order 82, the appropriate place is not Government Notices of Motion, but rather under Motions. This is required by Standing Order 36(1)(p) which establishes the proper place for the consideration of a motion relating to the management of the business of the House.

For example, when the Government decides to provide for an adjournment of the House for a period of time, not provided for in the Standing Orders, it gives 48 hours' notice and the motion appears in the Order Paper not under Government Notices of Motions but under Motions. In the case of a motion pursuant to Standing Order 82, of course, written notice is not