

Privilege

● (1520)

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I will be very helpful to you. I have been here too long not to catch the import of Your Honour's words.

I am respectful of the rules of the House, especially when the Speaker says that an incident is closed. I abide very willingly by Your Honour's decision and will not debate any further this unfortunate incident which took place earlier.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member, and I hope that other Hon. Members would co-operate with the Chair.

I might say to all Hon. Members that it is not the habit of the Chair to interfere often in Members' statements.

The real reason for having a rule, which has been commented upon by other Speakers, is that we do not engage in personal reflection upon the motivations, characters, or otherwise of Members. Of course when that happens it tends to lead to disorder, because other Members feel that it is unacceptable and then want to retort as well.

There is common sense to these rules. It is fundamental that we do not promote or accept in the Chamber that which creates disruption.

Again I say that I appreciate very much the comments and the grace with which the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis has supported the Chair. As I have said in front of all Hon. Members of the House, I take very seriously any intervention the Hon. Member makes.

Mr. Prud'homme: We have a very wise Speaker.

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PRIVILEGE**ALLEGED IMPROPER RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON THE ORDER PAPER**

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege regarding an incident which happened a little earlier. I indicate to the Chair that I am prepared to move the necessary motion to refer the matter to the appropriate parliamentary committee if Your Honour deems that I have a bona fide case of privilege.

On May 5, 1986 I put question No. 565 on the Notice Paper. This question, standing in my name, asked the Department of Agriculture for a number of reports regarding sanitary conditions at packing plants in southwestern Ontario. The question was never answered. I suppose that is not unusual. It could happen that Ministers, for whatever reason, decide not to respond to an Hon. Member's question.

However, I believe that it is against acceptable practices of the House—and I believe it can be found in Beauchesne's and Erskine May—when the question of an Hon. Member is not

answered, as my question was not, and the Hon. Member finds out a year and a half later that in fact the information requested was given to a reporter, one Jim Rohman of the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, in the exact format of an answer to an Order Paper question. Indeed that should be considered an abuse of my parliamentary privileges.

I have in hand a document entitled "Inquiry of Ministry". This document is usually given in response to an Hon. Member's question on the Notice Paper. The answer to question No. 565 should have been destined to myself, yet it was not given to me but to the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* last week. The document provides answers to very important questions regarding sanitary conditions at certain meat packing plants in Ontario.

Perhaps it is simply a mistake of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) in providing this information to the news media but not providing it to an Hon. Member of the House when the question was on the Order Paper. In fact, a copy of a notice to me, to be tabled in the House, was given to the reporter, not to myself. If it was a mistake either by the Minister or an official of his office, I will accept that, having the highest of respect for the Minister of Agriculture. He knows that I am the associate agricultural critic for our party. I accept that that could happen.

However, the failure of the Minister to provide an adequate explanation would lead me to believe that information sought by the House through a Notice Paper question, duly inscribed on the Order Paper on May 5, 1986, when his officials prepared the answer for him, when the answer was available in his office, and when the answer was provided to someone else who was not a Member of the House, was deliberately withheld from the House of Commons. Unless there is a satisfactory explanation, I would submit that that would be an infringement of my privileges as a Member of the House.

I am prepared to table for the benefit of the Chair, if there is an appropriate way to do it, information provided to me earlier today by the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* which indicates quite clearly that information destined to my office or to myself or, even more important, to be tabled in the House of Commons, was not provided to me but was instead provided to a reporter. I would hope that the Minister could provide such an explanation. In the absence of the failure of the Minister to do so, I would respectfully submit that I have a bona fide case of privilege which I should like to bring to the attention of the House.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) for his intervention which was extremely clear and helpful to the Chair. Perhaps the Hon. Minister would like to respond.

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to respond to the Hon. Member's questions and, shall I say, his new-found interest in question