

Mr. Riis: What have you been doing, John?

Mr. Axworthy: That's the kiss of death.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ACTION

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that this situation is occurring during lunch hours and breaks when Canadian workers should be doing the work, would the Minister send an instructive letter to individual ships in dock indicating that they are not to have the crews of foreign ships doing such on-shore work?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Hon. Member would do me the courtesy of giving me, in writing, all the details which he has just enunciated.

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SHIPBUILDING

CN MARINE—PROPOSED PURCHASE OF SHIPS FOR EAST COAST SERVICE

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. He will realize that the Canadian shipbuilding industry is in perhaps its worst slump in 40 years. I understand there is a proposal before him at the present time which would allow CN Marine to purchase offshore two ships for the East Coast. Will the Minister indicate to the House if he will allow this to take place in view of the fact that thousands of Canadians in the shipbuilding yards across the country are unemployed? Will he assure us that Canadian workers will be given the preference rather than foreign shipbuilding companies?

● (1500)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Hon. Member is aware that Transport Canada has in excess of 20 vessels being built in Canadian shipyards, which constitutes roughly 95 per cent of the shipyard building activity. There will be further work with respect to the refits.

I think the Hon. Member is also aware that I have a mandate to provide services at the lowest possible cost. These are the factors that will be taken into consideration in reaching a final decision with respect to the acquisition of the two vessels in question.

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CLERK OF PETITIONS' REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that petitions presented by Hon. Members on Monday, November 25, 1985, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

Privilege—Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques)

The petitions presented by the Hon. Member for The Battledords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Gormley) and the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's (Mr. Price), by filing with the Clerk of the House, also meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

TABLING OF SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO 1984 STATUTORY REPORT

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the Table the report on proposed legislative changes, supplementary to the 1984 Statutory Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada.

May I remind Hon. Members that pursuant to Standing Order 47(4), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

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[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

PROPRIETY OF ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE HOUSE PARTICIPATING IN DEBATE

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, this morning I gave the Chair notice of my intention to raise a question of privilege in connection with the participation in debate in this Chamber yesterday by the Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House, the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Charest). I intend to show, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke acted in a manner that is contrary to the usual behaviour of a Presiding Officer, who is expected to show complete impartiality. In my opinion, he failed to do so, by the very fact of taking part in debate in the House. Furthermore, I intend to show that his comments were partisan and therefore unworthy of an Acting Speaker of the House of Commons.

By his actions he breached the privilege of all Members of this House who, on the basis of the Standing Orders and parliamentary tradition, have every right to expect the Presiding Officer to observe absolutely strict impartiality.

First of all, if we consider his participation in debate, according to tradition a Presiding Officer may not take part in debate in the House. This is clearly established by parliamentary jurisprudence, and I want to quote from Beauchesne's, Citation 117, which deals with the Speaker as Presiding Officer of the House of Commons. Citation 117 of Beauchesne's, Fifth Edition, page 38, reads as follows, and I quote: