

● (1510)

An hon. Member: Withdraw.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. member knows that he cannot use those words. They are considered to be unparliamentary, and I am sure that the hon. member can find other ways of saying what he has to say either to the minister or to his parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Fraser: Madam Speaker, what I said that you find obnoxious was that "for one reason or the other, the minister is misleading the House." Earlier I said that this was being done out of mischievousness or ignorance or deceit. If Madam Speaker decides that "for one reason or another" includes deceit then, of course, I will abide by the rules of this honourable House and withdraw them.

I will say this, that what has been said by the parliamentary secretary and by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) this afternoon is just not the case. If that is not misleading the House, then I do not know what is. It may have been unintentional and I will give the hon. members the benefit of the doubt, which is more perhaps than the rest of the House will give them. But I want it very clearly understood by all hon. members, including those on the government side, that the move was contentious because the hon. member from Cornwall who is now the Minister of State for Trade (Mr. Lumley) did not want the move to go ahead. It has been well known for a long time, because during the life of the Liberal government before our Conservative government the hon. member from Cornwall made representations to the effect that he did not want the move to go ahead.

I must tell the House, through you, Madam Speaker, that on the information given to me as minister in the last Parliament it was clearly cost advantageous—

Mr. Harquail: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

An hon. Member: This is a question of privilege.

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member may have the floor later, but for now I have given the floor to the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser).

Mr. Fraser: I am telling the House, through you, Madam Speaker, that on the information that was given to me by my officials it was clearly cost advantageous to the public interest to make that move. I am also telling the House that hon. members opposite, who formed the Liberal government just prior to our government, ought to know very clearly that it was the same advice that was given to their minister. The information, if I can call it that, or the representations made last night by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, are clearly not true.

Let me repeat, Madam Speaker, that the decision to go ahead with the move was made last summer. There were

Privilege—Mr. Domm

representations brought to me and I listened to those representations. They were brought to me by the hon. member from Cornwall and by people from the town of Cornwall. After listening to these people, I made it clear to them at the turn of the year that I saw no need to change the decision which I had made last summer.

The suggestion that is being made here by the parliamentary secretary, speaking on behalf of the Minister of the Environment, is just not so. The decision was made and that decision was confirmed later, after I had received, as the then minister of the environment, certain representations from people of the town of Cornwall. These people were entitled to demand that I listen to what they had to say, but I made it clear at the meeting that anything they had to say was taken as representations, and I confirmed that I was not changing my mind.

The Minister of State for Trade has a copy of my letter which makes that point clear and which was made public at the time. The suggestion made by the parliamentary secretary about the hon. member for Peterborough is clearly not correct. No member of this House should have to take those kinds of statements made on behalf of the minister without your intervention, Madam Speaker.

I want to add one other thing. The President of the Treasury Board said a few minutes ago that his officials had advised him that there was a cost advantage in keeping Parks Canada in Cornwall. I repeat, if that is so, then there was a remarkable change in the advice given to me as the then minister of the environment by my officials as compared with the advice given to the President of the Treasury Board by his officials. I do not wish to trespass into the bounds of impropriety, but it is extraordinarily difficult for me to believe that there was such a sudden change in the cost assessment, a change that was brought about by the election of February 18.

I think that a question of privilege has clearly been raised, and the public of Canada has a right to accurate statements on events from the government of the day.

Mr. Harquail: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order for clarification purposes. The House seems to be labouring under abuse of the rules or delaying tactics. You ruled, Madam Speaker, last week that the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) was not a question of privilege but a matter of disagreement. We heard all these arguments last week and now, once again, we are taking up the time of the House to hear belaboured arguments. I would like to know from you, Madam Speaker, whether or not there is a question of privilege here.

Mr. Siddon: We are talking about last night.

Mr. Roger Simmons (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, first I would like to respond