

*Privilege—Mr. Lawrence*

what we are doing here is taking steps which cause me to have serious concern for what we will have perpetrated on the people of our country.

It is not a matter of interpreting laws and whether we should answer a constitutional question one way or the other. It is a process which you must address yourself to, Madam Speaker. Should you, as Speaker, rule that the House may proceed with the completion of this particular resolution before the court has adjudicated upon the process? If that happens, we may all be standing in different parts of this country in years to come. If the court does hold as I have indicated, we will be asking ourselves, "How do we recover from the position we have put the people of Canada in? How do we recover as far as the courts are concerned?" That is the matter that should be considered by Your Honour, and I very strongly support the submission and the excellent presentation made by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Madam Speaker:** I would like to rule immediately on this important point of order, but precisely because of the importance of the arguments brought forward and the very numerous references and citations that I will be called upon to reconcile, I will take the matter under advisement and rule on this point of order later.

I have some questions of privilege and I will call first the one that was deferred yesterday by the hon. member for Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence).

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**PRIVILEGE**

MR. LAWRENCE—ALLEGED MISLEADING ANSWER GIVEN BY MR. KAPLAN

**Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland):** Madam Speaker, on Friday, the last sitting day of the House, on coming to my office I found certain press comments. As a result, I gave you written notice of what I considered to be a breach of my privileges as a member of the House.

Because it does summarize the matter, and since this is a very serious point of privilege, as far as I am concerned in any event, may I merely for the attention of the House read the letter that I sent to you on March 27:

Madam Speaker:

It has just now come to my notice, upon reading the Canadian Press wire story in *The Globe and Mail* of today's date, that I have what I believe to be a question of privilege, and I give you notice that I wish to raise it today, this being the earliest possible moment.

You will remember that in the House yesterday, after the oral question period, I asked the Solicitor General two questions relating to security occurrences of approximately 20 to 25 years ago. On both occasions, the Solicitor General refused to answer my questions on the grounds that it would not be in the public interest, and that traditionally the Solicitor General has made no public comment on such matters.

I am therefore more than surprised, I am disappointed and hurt, and I believe my privileges have been transgressed to just now read in the above mentioned

Canadian Press wire story, that the Solicitor General, minutes later, went outside the House and in a press interview answered both questions that earlier he had refused to answer in the House of Commons.

Yours truly,

**Some hon. Members:** Shame, shame.

**Mr. Lawrence:** I am aware of Citation 19(2) of Beauchesne, found on page 12, which says:

The failure of a minister of the Crown to answer a question may not be raised as a question of privilege.

I am not arguing that point. I am not arguing that the minister of the Crown involved in this matter did not answer my question. He answered my question. I have no argument at all with a minister if he wants to sit down and do nothing; but in this case, this did not happen. The minister answered my question.

It does not fall under Citation 19(1) either, which I quote:

A dispute arising between two members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

I am not arguing that point. This is not a disputation between the minister and myself as to an allegation of fact.

Citation 19(3) says:

Statements made outside the House by a member may not be used as the base for a question of privilege.

I am not arguing that the statements made outside the House by the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) constitute my question of privilege. My question of privilege is simply this. In answer to a question in this House, Madam Speaker, the minister misled me and he misled you; he misled all members of this House. I think it directly pertains to my privilege as a member of this House because he was answering my question.

● (1720)

I would just bring to your attention the question that I asked in the House. I asked if he, as Solicitor General would establish the identities of the British interrogators of Mr. Gouzenko. One of two questions that I asked was whether the Solicitor General had established the identity of the British interrogators of Mr. Gouzenko? In his answer the Solicitor General said to me, to you and to this House that he refused to answer that question and he implicitly referred to his answer to my first question, and I quote:

—it is not the practice or policy of the Solicitor General to comment on such allegations, and I have no intention of doing so.

"I have no intention of doing so." Then the minister has the gall and the nerve, I suggest to you, to breach my privileges in this House by going outside the House and, in a press interview with a number of members of the press gallery, give the very answer that I requested him to give in this House and which he said he had no intention of giving.

I cannot find a more blatant, blunt attempt to mislead me. I know I can get into trouble if I say that the minister intentionally did that so I will not say that, but I will point out to you that less than 12 minutes elapsed between the time the minister said in the House that he had no intention of answering