

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 25, 1972

The House met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. BROADBENT—ALLEGED CONFLICT IN MINISTERS' STATEMENTS CONCERNING IMPORTING OF CERTAIN TIRES BY MICHELIN FREE OF DUTY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. In a letter dated June 21, 1971, sent to me by the former Minister of Finance, now Minister of National Defence (Mr. Benson), the hon. gentleman asserted:

The government has agreed to permit the Michelin Company to import certain types and sizes of tires duty-free for a period of three years—

On May 8 of this year the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) asserted in the House, as reported on page 1973 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, the government has not authorized any duty-free entry of certain types or sizes of tires for the Michelin Company, nor has any decision been reached as to when such a remission would come into effect.

On May 9, I once again questioned the minister on this point, asking whether the three-year concession had been cancelled or put off to another time. The Minister of Finance replied, as reported on page 2087:

I would interpret it primarily as a matter of time, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, on May 11 the Minister of Finance asserted in the House that "no remission or relief has actually been granted to the Michelin Company".

In today's *Globe and Mail* it is reported that Mr. J. D. Moore, president of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company of Canada, asserted in a speech in Toronto yesterday that the Michelin Tire Company of Nova Scotia had been granted the right to import tires duty-free into Canada for a three-year period beginning in 1970 as a concession for establishing two plants in Nova Scotia. This confirms the statement made to me in the letter of the former Minister of Finance last year.

In view of the seriousness of this contradictory information provided by two ministers of the Crown, I move:

That this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections and that the Minister of Finance be requested to appear before that committee in order to make a full explanatory statement on the question of tariff concessions made to the Michelin Tire Company.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has given the Chair notice of his intention to bring this matter before the House by way of a question of privilege. I think the hon. member knows the rules and practices of the House in relation to statements made outside the House and statements that are allegedly contradictory. It is a long-established point of procedure that this cannot be raised in the

House by way of question of privilege. I refer hon. members to Citation 113 in Beauchesne's Fourth Edition which states in part:

• (1410)

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

This, of course, extends to contradictions which may come to the attention of hon. members in relation to statements made by two ministers. I do not think this kind of situation ought to be discussed by the House by way of a question of privilege and then referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The duty of the Chair is to determine whether there is a prima facie case of privilege. I have to rule that in view of the precedents and long-established practice the matter cannot be considered by the House at this time as suggested by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM ROUMANIA

Mr. Speaker: I should like to draw to the attention of the House the presence in the Speaker's gallery of a very distinguished parliamentary delegation from Roumania, led by His Excellency Mr. Stefan Voitec, President of the Grand National Assembly of Roumania.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members may recall that Roumania was a most gracious host last year to a delegation of members of this House. The President of the National Assembly, accompanied by Madame Voitec, and four parliamentary colleagues are now visiting Canada as guests of the House of Commons. On behalf of hon. members I extend to them a very hearty welcome.

[Translation]

I also know I am expressing the sentiments of each and every hon. member of the House in welcoming President Voitec, Madame Voitec and members of the National Assembly of Roumania. I am convinced that their visit to Canada will further enhance the co-operation which already characterizes the relations between Roumania and Canada.

Mr. President, I very sincerely hope that your stay among us, unfortunately of too short duration, will have been both a pleasant and a rewarding experience for all members of your delegation.