

Alleged Leak re New Airport Site

the house or individual members have not in any way been affected. For that reason I submit that Your Honour should find there is no prima facie case of privilege.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) obligingly presented us in his remarks with many arguments which we had not put forward before.

His statement to the effect that a minister shows courtesy when giving information to the house seems to me an arrogant attitude towards the house, because I think that all the ministers, including the Prime Minister, must first tell the house of the new policies which the government plans.

If the ministers can now "only out of courtesy" inform the house of changes in the government policy, why ask hon. members to be present in the house?

Of what use will be the press, radio and television, whose function is now to make known the policy of the federal government, if, in the future, the latter deems it advisable to make its policy known through private and business agencies instead of informing the house?

The matter under study is very important and, for this reason, I would support the suggestion made by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) with regard to the events that have taken place Thursday morning, Thursday afternoon and later, when the Minister of Transport stated that the Quebec government and the city of Montreal had both been consulted while four provincial ministers denied that this had happened. Since that announcement was made public, we can see that those bodies are displeased, insulted and they claim that they were not consulted by the federal government.

However, we have not only the feeling that a secret of the house was betrayed, we have also evidence of it or something that amounts to evidence. Who is telling us the truth? Is it the Minister of Transport? Is it the government of the province that says it was not consulted?

I believe that for some time now, the federal government has had the knack of running counter to federal-provincial relations, especially as concerns the province of Quebec.

It is difficult to believe that the Minister of Transport came to a decision with the cabinet only Thursday morning, since the publicity, including documents in color and of superior

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

quality, had been printed, something which cannot be done in ten minutes.

Now, I feel justified to doubt the statement of the Prime Minister. Not only is it unlikely that the decision as only taken on Thursday, but it seems that the provincial government was not consulted, contrary to what he stated in the house on Thursday afternoon.

That is why we approve the motion of the hon. member for Calgary North.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: On Friday last the hon. member for Calgary North rose on a question of privilege concerning the alleged taping of an announcement dealing with the selection of a choice for the new Montreal airport. In closing his remarks, the hon. member proposed to move a motion as follows:

I move that the question of information of the announcement of the new Montreal International Airport at or near St. Jerome, Quebec, having been given prior to the said announcement by the government in the House of Commons and including all the circumstances under which the allegation is made, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of the house, so that a full inquiry investigation may be made and that the said committee be empowered to examine all persons and papers material to the matter in question.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Mainly because two of the members more directly concerned with the matter were not in the house at that moment I felt it might be fair and proper to wait until they were in the house and had an opportunity to make a statement, before a ruling could be made or might be made on the procedural aspect of the motion proposed by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams).

The Chair of course is grateful to all hon. members who have taken part in the discussion. The particular point at issue at this time is whether there exists a prima facie case of privilege.

The hon. member for Calgary North raised the point as to whether this matter had been raised at the first opportunity, and I would think it was raised at the first opportunity. When the hon. member brought the question up on Friday without prior notice, I had some doubt for a moment as to whether he might not have been required to give the usual notice. At the same time I gathered that the question was being raised as a result of a question or questions asked of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), which to some extent at least made it proper and procedurally correct