

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 27, 1972

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. LAFLAMME—PROCEEDINGS IN PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Ovide Laflamme (Montmorency): Mr. Speaker, I take the first opportunity to raise a question of privilege, as an hon. member and as chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The House will recall that under an order of reference dated March 14 allegations concerning wiretapping and opening of mail of members of this House were referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, of which I am chairman.

Further to this order of reference, Mr. Speaker, the committee held three meetings. Furthermore, the subcommittee on procedure made rulings and recommendations which were approved by all those present.

I now come to my question of privilege which is, in my opinion, a major one. Following the recommendations submitted by the subcommittee on procedure and approved by the committee, four of our colleagues had been invited to appear before the committee.

One of them, actually the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) who preferred not to appear before the committee, sent me, after this morning's sitting, a letter accusing me, as chairman of the committee, as bias—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I admit that the hon. member is coming to his question of privilege. However, I wonder whether he has taken into account the provisions of the Standing Order, whereby an hon. member should give the Chair written notice one hour in advance of his intention to raise a question of privilege.

Of course, when the question arises from proceedings in the House, no prior notice is required.

• (1410)

The hon. member should, I suggest, consider giving notice in writing after which the question of privilege could be raised by him in due course, either later today or tomorrow.

Mr. Laflamme: Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully suggest that the question of privilege, concerning me and the letter to which I refer was not at all considered by me as giving rise to a question of privilege.

Nevertheless, it is only a few minutes before the House met and some time after the letter was sent to me that I became aware—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I really feel it would be quite difficult for the Chair to consider the question of privilege now unless the specific provision of the Standing Order to which I referred, had been respected, i.e. that one hour's prior notice had been given to the Chair.

[English]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MANPOWER

TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH PROVINCIAL PREMIERS ON PROGRAMS

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Prime Minister I should like to table under Standing Order 41(2) copies of correspondence with provincial premiers on the subject of manpower programs.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

APPOINTMENT OF JEAN-LOUIS GAGNON AS AMBASSADOR TO UNESCO—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 43 I seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion, seconded by the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. McCutcheon):

In view of the uncertainty and discredit that exists in Information Canada, this Canadian House of Commons regrets the appointment of the Director General of that department, Jean-Louis Gagnon, as ambassador to UNESCO in Paris before a full exoneration of his responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker: I have some doubts as to the acceptability of the hon. member's motion. It is in the form of a charge against a high official of the government. I may be wrong in my interpretation of the motion, and the hon. member is indicating by his reaction that my interpretation of his motion may be wrong. Perhaps it might be easier to put the motion. Hon. members know the procedure regarding accusations, charges or allegations made respecting senior officials of the government. The hon. member indicates that that is not the essence or the interpretation of the motion and I will therefore put it. The House has heard the motion proposed by the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster. The motion is proposed under the terms of Standing Order 43 and requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.