

privilege will be raised, particularly one that concerns two members, and that their ability to be present at the earliest possible moment be explored. The matter should proceed at the earliest possible moment in the presence of those two members. Therefore, the matter perhaps ought to stand over for at least one day. I will call the question tomorrow at three o'clock.

MR. MCKINNON—ALLEGATION MINISTER MISLED HOUSE
CONCERNING ADMIRAL BOYLE'S RESIGNATION

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege goes back a few days. I indicated to Your Honour on May 16 that I intended to raise a question of privilege on the first occasion on which the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Danson) and I were simultaneously in the House. That occasion is now with us.

As I mentioned briefly on May 16, my reason for raising this question of privilege, my first in over four years as a member, is the difference between the answers given to me in this House by the minister and the statements made by Vice-Admiral Boyle. With your permission, I will quote from excerpts from *Hansard* and some of the statements of Vice-Admiral Boyle.

On May 13, I asked the Minister if he would enlighten the House as to the reasons for the early retirement of Vice-Admiral Boyle. The Minister replied:

It reflects the normal rotation of commanders which has taken place throughout the armed forces with the appointment of the new CDS.

I asked a supplementary question:

Does the minister deny that Admiral Boyle was asked to resign—

The Minister replied:

Mr. Speaker, I can absolutely deny the allegation of the hon. member.

I asked the minister a second supplementary, and I quote the second half:

Is it not true that after he declined to resign he was offered a position which would have removed him from any participation in naval affairs for the rest of his service?

The minister replied:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is still suggesting that the admiral was asked to resign.

That tells us what the minister had to say about the resignation at that time. The *Globe and Mail* came out with a CP release from Halifax dated May 19, and I quote:

Admiral Boyle was asked to resign his post here but when he refused he was offered a position in Ottawa which he originally declined.

The *Montreal Gazette* came out with a story on May 14 headlined "Admiral was asked to resign". I quote from the story:

Vice-Admiral Douglas Boyle was asked to resign as a commander of the navy by military brass, he said yesterday.

The *Globe and Mail* of May 14 stated, and I quote:

I was asked to quit Admiral Boyle reveals . . . Vice-Admiral Boyle confirmed yesterday he had been asked to resign . . . Mr. Danson invited Admiral Boyle to

Privilege—Mr. McKinnon

Ottawa to hear his side of the story and was embarrassed to admit yesterday that he did not know about the Falls-Boyle confrontation.

There are many more statements that could be quoted to show the contradiction. I find difficulty in believing that all of these members of the press gallery were individually and collectively misled into believing something that was not true. I will summarize briefly.

The minister claimed that Vice-Admiral Boyle had not been asked to resign and that his resignation was a normal routine retirement. Anyone accepting Vice-Admiral Boyle's statements would have to conclude that the minister has indeed misled the House.

I have never said, or indeed thought that the minister did so deliberately. It is my opinion that he did so through being uninformed or ignorant of what was going on in the Department of National Defence in the weeks prior to the resignation. Why else would the minister be embarrassed by what he found out from his discussion with Vice-Admiral Boyle on the afternoon of the 13th of May, shortly after he had stated unequivocally that Boyle was not asked to resign. He would not be embarrassed by any misunderstanding between two senior officers. No, Mr. Speaker, he could only be embarrassed in this instance by finding out that he had unwittingly misled the House.

The Minister did not in any way qualify his remarks in the House on May 13. Had he prefaced his remarks by the usual cautionary remarks such as "to the best of his knowledge" or that "he couldn't be expected to know everything that took place in private conversations between senior officers", it would have been understandable and forgivable, but no, he stated quite flatly, definitely and unequivocally that Vice-Admiral Boyle had not been asked to resign and that this was a routine retirement.

If this were only a matter of disagreement or debate between the minister and myself, believe me, I would not consider it important enough for my first question of privilege in this House, but the reputation of a third person is at stake here. If the minister's statements were to remain unchanged and unchallenged, it would mean that the statements of Vice-Admiral Boyle are considered by this House to be fabrications.

Two things should be considered here. First, Vice-Admiral Boyle and not the minister was present at the meeting Boyle had with the senior officer or officers at NDHQ when his resignation was allegedly requested. Second, the reputation, and a very good reputation it is, of the senior naval officer in the Canadian forces has been or will likely be tarnished if the hearsay evidence, unfortunately placed by the minister in *Hansard* is allowed to stand, and it should not be overlooked that Vice-Admiral Boyle has no opportunity to defend himself in the same forum in which he has been accused. You are no doubt aware, Mr. Speaker, that an opportunity for him to present his side of the case to the Standing Committee on National Defence was vetoed by the government majority on the steering committee.

I sincerely hope that the minister will now rise and admit that he was either ill-informed, misinformed or uninformed