

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe)—St. Lawrence Seaway—Reimbursement of debt; the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz)—Immigration—Suicide of Alicia Wiercioch—Request for Investigation; the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin)—Pensions—Old Age Security—Alleged intention of Quebec government to profit by part of recent increase—Request for statement from minister.

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PRIVILEGE

**MR. BURTON—ALLEGED MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS
BY MINISTER CONCERNING GRANT TO MANIWAKI
FOREST PRODUCTS**

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege which affects the rights of all members of the House and involves the responsibilities of the government to this House in relation to the spending of money. I raise this question of privilege at the first opportunity, this matter just having come to my attention this afternoon as a result of a press report in an Ottawa paper, and I have given Your Honour the one hour prescribed notice that I intended to raise this question of privilege.

The basis for my question of privilege first of all rests on the provisions of the Regional Development Incentives Act, section 5, which prescribes the types of development incentive grants that may be paid to industries or to firms which apply for such a grant. Section 5 (2) reads:

The amount of a secondary development incentive shall be based on the approved capital costs of establishing or expanding the facility in respect of which the secondary development incentive is authorized and on the number of jobs created directly in the operation and shall not exceed

(a) 5 per cent of those approved capital costs,
plus

(b) \$5,000 for each job determined by the minister to have been created directly in the operation.

There are other provisions in that section but this is the relevant one. That was amended later by Bill C-205, in the session of 1970-71, when provision was made for another type of special development incentive grant that also included a provision for a grant of \$2,000.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest the hon. member should indicate as quickly as possible what the question of privilege is. I suggest that the hon. member cannot take the time of the House to make a long speech. He has to indicate as quickly as possible what the question of privilege might be, and the Chair will indicate whether in its view there is a prima facie case. The hon. member cannot, under the guise of an alleged question of privilege, make a lengthy presentation.

Mr. Burton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I merely wish to establish the statutory basis upon which I raise this matter. The cause of the question of privilege was an announcement by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion on June 6 of some regional development incentives grants in the province of Quebec, and the one in particular to which I wish to make reference involves the

[Mr. Speaker.]

Maniwaki Forest Products Limited of Montreal which has accepted an offer of approximately \$181,000 for a new veneer facility at Maniwaki. The project is expected to create an estimated 74 jobs, and the incentive grant is in the range of 15 per cent of the approved capital cost estimated at \$472,000 plus \$1,500 for each job created. That is the information which was provided to members. This information also has to be provided to members in regular reports under the provisions of section 16 of the Regional Development Incentives Act which specifies that there shall be a monthly report on the operations of that act.

In the *Ottawa Journal* of today's date, it was reported that the Maniwaki mayor welcomed the announcement of this grant, but then it was also reported that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to remind the hon. member that so far as I can gather, up until this moment there has been nothing that has even remotely resembled a question of privilege. The hon. member should indicate clearly how he feels that the privileges of the House have been abused. He should know, as we all do, that a dispute as to facts or the failure of the minister to give information or the allegation that information given by the minister is incorrect has nothing to do with privilege and cannot be raised by way of a question of privilege. Until now, this is all the hon. member has indicated. He should try as quickly as possible to indicate what the question of privilege is.

Mr. Burton: I was just at the point of pointing out that the plant manager stated that the number of employees would not be increased. This statement indicates a direct contravention of the legislation which has been passed by the House and would result in a misuse of public funds. Also, false information has been provided to members of the House, information which it is required should be placed before the House under the terms of section 16 of the Regional Development Incentives Act. The plant manager in this case is quoted as saying:

We'll replace our outdated machinery and we'll still operate on a one shift basis with our 74 employees.

• (2010)

There is no increase in the number of jobs created. This is not in accordance with the minister's statement, on the basis on which he is expected to report to the House, so a contravention of the legislation involving an expenditure of public funds has been revealed, and he is guilty of false reporting on this matter in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that there should not be a debate on this question. This is clearly not a question of privilege; it is a dispute as to facts. I indicated a moment ago why a grievance of this kind cannot be considered by the House under the guise of a question of privilege. The hon. member may have a grievance; he may be right in his contention, but certainly a debate, if there were going to be one on the hon. member's representation or grievance, should not be entered upon in the House by way of a question of privilege.