

row, if we still believe there are a number of other issues that require at least clarification, specifically the reference made to a letter that was alleged to have been sent by the hon. member to certain businessmen—we may want to know whether that was done, the date of the letter, for example, and its contents. The House has a right, certainly, in terms of the knowledge we have up to this point, to expect such information to be made available.

As I say, we accept the procedural steps the hon. member has recommended and suggested that he will be taking, and depending on the release and disclosure of information we think is important, we may or may not decide to refer other questions to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections tomorrow, and may or may not decide to move a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 26.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is evident that the prudent course to follow is to reserve judgment on this matter until tomorrow morning. I might say that hon. members should give some consideration, in the interim, to the fact that if it were to be suggested to the House, or if the Chair is to be asked to leave it to the House to decide whether or not a matter should be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, the substance of that matter should be fairly clearly defined. A motion which includes a hypothesis and the words "that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections", obviously is no guidance to the Chair. It must be clear whether one is talking about the conduct of the newspaper or the conduct of the hon. member, among other difficulties. Members ought to be forewarned that whatever conduct, practice or experience they wish referred to the standing committee should be clearly defined in any motion.

In the meantime, I would think it only fair that the notice of motion I have received from the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) and the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) on questions of privilege, and the notice of motion, pursuant to Standing Order 26, received from the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) should stand until tomorrow morning. We would reserve to those members the rights they ordinarily would enjoy pursuant to those notices.

There is, of course, nothing to prevent other hon. members, if they so desire, in the interim providing the Chair with notice of motion of questions of privilege which I would hope would be in specific terms in respect of the circumstances of this particular matter. There is, of course, always the other matter that hon. members ought to consider, which is that the door is open at any time for any member of the House to make specific allegations or charges against another member of the House for his misconduct, if it seems advisable to that hon. member to support it with his own allegations, with the usual consequences. Those are areas which hon. members ought to consider. In the meantime, all outstanding notices of motions on the subject to which I have referred will stand over for further consideration tomorrow.

Mr. Stevens: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Since Your Honour referred to the fact that any motions should be in specific terms, I should mention that I would

be quite prepared to move my motion in specific terms at the present time, if that would be in order.

Mr. Speaker: I only issued that as a bit of warning. I think it is advisable that the matter stand over until tomorrow, at which time if there is a motion, depending upon the events of tomorrow, and the hon. member wants to move it, if he would be at liberty to do so at that time.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether there would be the right to ask questions. The things that I thought were unsaid today are, what did the hon. member say in his conversation with Mr. Hamilton of the *Gazette*? Was that conversation taped? Where is the tape, if there is one, and will it be procured? Those things were left unsaid. Will we be permitted to ask questions when the question period is called?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Having adopted an extraordinary procedure with the consent of the House, the procedure is that the House has until 3.25 for questions. There are other proceedings and questions of privilege which could be taken up in the ordinary course after the question period expires. The difficulty we face, on the point of order raised by hon. members, is that there is no procedure, in any of the precedents of which I am aware, whereby questions can be directed to a parliamentary secretary to a minister while the minister is present in the House. I have not been able to find any such precedent.

There is, of course, nothing to restrict hon. members asking questions of the ministry, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), members of the cabinet, or perhaps the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) in respect of alleged practices by the parliamentary secretary. But I would have to hear the question in order to determine whether it is in order. However, it might raise a curious problem if questions directed to any other ministers could be referred by those ministers to the parliamentary secretary himself; I don't know. That has not occurred; it is something for speculation at the moment.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MR. REID—DATE OF KNOWLEDGE OF CHANGE IN TAX ON BOATS—POSSIBLE COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION TO CONSTITUENTS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker might I be quite direct and ask whether I have permission to direct a question or two to the parliamentary secretary, in order to save the time of the House. If I have permission to do that I might even ask the Government House Leader to leave for a moment in order to make it legal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: On the assumption that I have such permission—