

as a whole, particularly with respect to a matter that can be argued later, that we get to dealing with the bill on the northern pipeline, which can have some significance for the country and which, hopefully, we may be able to deal with in all final stages before the House rises at six o'clock today.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There has been rather lengthy discussion on this matter today, particularly in light of the fact that it remains to be established whether the matter does touch privilege. There are some serious concerns about it, and it is a very substantial matter. However, it does appear to relate to events outside the House essentially, and also to nominating conventions.

I am fascinated by the argument made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) initially, which does not come to the assistance of his general proposition, but which is that since members of the House as elected members really have no propriety or property in the nominating process, but it is that of a party, it may be a grievance among the local officials and the New Democratic Party of that particular area. It is difficult to extend it to members of the House because, in fact, the member of the House has no more right to be at that nominating convention as a candidate than any other candidate, who in this case does not exist.

In any event, I am not making a final adjudication. I simply say the matter is complicated, and if it is to be established as a question of privilege it would have to be done so on the basis of the intervention, that has been suggested, by the hon. member for the Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth). Accordingly I agree with those who have suggested that the matter ought to stand over until the hon. member himself is here and has had the opportunity to give us the benefit of his presentation. Perhaps then there may be contributions by other hon. members.

I have received notice of what I think may be an acceptable and very brief question of privilege by the Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne).

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. LAMONTAGNE—POSTAL SERVICE

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I shall be brief, because the bill dealing with the pipeline is more important. When a reputation has been attacked, I feel it is sometimes necessary to set the record straight and make public concrete evidence to dispel certain allegations.

Ever since I was elected to the House of Commons, I have noticed that hon. members are used to asking questions about the Post Office, the mail delivery, and that they often include in their preambles comments which are sometimes unfair and generalizations which smack of demagoguery. They recall inci-

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dents which may have unduly undermined the confidence the Canadian public should have in the Post Office Department.

[English]

You will remember the incident of an offering to my predecessor, which was a Christmas cake that was accidentally damaged. You will remember the story—

An hon. Member: What is the question of privilege?

Mr. Lamontagne: I will come to it, sir.

There was an accidental mail spillover on Highway 401 that was made into a horror story, and yet was purely an accidental incident. Even yesterday the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) gave me a bundle of misdirected mail which arrived in the Yukon instead of Montreal. It, too, probably was an accidental incident.

Such stories tend to have an effect on our management and a great majority of our workers. I would like to mention something which happened in the last few days which indicates that the Post Office does not do everything wrong.

● (1542)

A few days ago I received a letter from Montreal. As usual, it took only one day to come from Montreal to Ottawa. The letter will confirm this.

[Translation]

I am sending you, under separate cover, the traditional Easter egg.

This Easter gift was in a way a show of confidence in the Post Office.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, this being the start of Holy Week, a time when all the faithful show compassion and generosity, it is my intention, with the permission of hon. members, to deposit this egg and a copy of the letter in the National Post Office Museum. This will reassure all Canadians, especially those in Toronto and Montreal, that not only is there great hope in the future for the Post Office—

Some hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting the third report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.