

Privilege

look into the matters brought to the attention of the house by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

I should say at this point it is my understanding that the document which was the subject of discussion in the committee is the same as the document presented as a return to a Notice of Motion for the production of papers in this house on Wednesday, April 23, registered as Sessional Paper No. 22-B and laid upon the table on May 8.

It seems to me, having considered the available records both of the committee and of this house, that the matter raised by the hon. member is more properly one to be considered in relation to events as they occurred in the house rather than in a committee, in that the document in question, as I understand it, is the same in both cases. Therefore, it seems to me, the matter is one concerning the description of the document. It is a question of interpreting whether the document tabled is the paper the production of which the hon. member had sought by his Notice of Motion. I suggest that the matter raised does not constitute a question of privilege.

If the document sought by the hon. member has not been provided for him, in my view his remedy would be to place on the order paper a notice of motion in explicit terms asking perhaps—and I use his own words—for “a cost-benefit study as prescribed by Treasury Board Manual Planning Programming Budgeting Guide.” This, presumably, will either be supplied or it will not be. If it is not, it is open for the hon. member to ask for the motion to be transferred for debate and the matter can be discussed and voted upon.

The Chair should say that on the evidence available it is impossible to make a determination as to whether the document presented is in fact the document sought by the hon. member. Hon. members know that the Chair has to rule primarily on whether there is a prima facie case of privilege. In view of the facts as I have been able to ascertain them, I must reach the conclusion that there is no prima facie case of privilege. I, therefore, suggest to the hon. member that he might consider the possibility of following the procedure I have just outlined.

The time being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair.

At six o'clock the house took recess.
[Mr. Speaker.]

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

ALLOTTED DAY, STANDING ORDER 58—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—GOVERNMENT MIS-MANAGEMENT CAUSING DETERIORATION IN POSTAL SERVICE

The house resumed consideration of the motion Mr. Macquarrie and the amendment thereto of Mr. Benjamin.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I was astounded at the heat with which the Postmaster General replied to the three opposition parties this afternoon. I know he is a virtuoso at setting up strawman arguments and then sending them crashing to the ground, but I believe he failed miserably in answering any of the basic questions raised by members of the opposition.

The minister stood with all his defence mechanisms working overtime, shouting irrelevancies in a strained and harassed voice, producing much heat but very little light on the real problems facing the users of the Canadian postal service. What infuriated me even more was the attack he launched against “an hon. member” for maligning the local Postmaster in Prince Rupert from the member’s position of privilege. To use the words of the Postmaster General, it was a “deplorable position” to take since the civil servant had no opportunity to defend himself.

I am certain the Postmaster General will recall that before the “hon. member” took any position in this matter, he discussed it with the minister in this house on Monday night. The minister himself suggested, and both agreed, that two questions might be asked the following day during the oral question period. Accordingly, on Tuesday morning I sent a copy of two questions to the minister’s office as notice, along with a covering letter. I sent these documents by messenger marked urgent. Incidentally, the envelope also contained all the pertinent documents which I had in my possession, and which I used to support my case on Tuesday evening.

I would like to quote from the letter and also read the questions, Mr. Speaker. The letter, signed by myself, is dated May 13, 1969. I quote:

Dear Mr. Kierans:

As a result of our conversation last evening please find enclosed the documents you requested along