relevance to us in searching back 40 years ago, we certainly would welcome that and would be pleased to pursue it, but all of us have an obligation not to unfairly accuse distinguished members of the Canadian Forces who cannot respond.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party rises and, of course, I will hear him. I might indicate to him that I think I have heard enough to consider the matter which, of course, I will, but I will, of course, hear the Hon. Member at least for a few minutes.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I listened with care to what the Minister had to say, as I usually do. And I heard the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton). I rise at this point to respond to the last point the Minister made which is a repetition of one he made earlier, namely, if anyone has any evidence on this very important matter potentially affecting the health of Canadians, they should bring it forward.

My suggestion very concretely, and I would like to hear the Minister respond to it this afternoon before we complete this very important question of privilege which has been raised, is that there is an individual, living in Calgary today, who claims he had direct involvement and direct knowledge about the situation at hand, and he is describing his facts not relying on a newspaper article from Victoria.

• (1520)

He was actually there. Has his senior staff talked to him? If not, if he wants to get to the bottom of this, the truth, why does he not talk to him?

Mr. Speaker: I will let the Hon. Minister reply shortly, but I do not think any further discussion will help the Speaker very much.

I might indicate to Hon. Members that while there clearly seems to be a difference of opinion as to facts, and there may be very good reason why there is a difference of opinion as to facts, I have some difficulty seeing that it amounts to a breach of privilege. I will hear the Minister shortly.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, essentially the Leader of the New Democratic Party is extending Question Period under the guise of a question of privilege. I can indicate to him that immediately after the individual in question was on CTV—

Mr. Speaker: If the Hon. Minister can assist the Chair, I will hear him. I am not having any further arguments between the two sides.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to respond to the question that was posed to me. After the matter was raised on the CTV *National News*, I asked my staff to contact the individual in question. I do not know whether they have succeeded in doing it to date. They had difficulty initially reaching him. I will verify as to whether or not they have been able to reach him to date and will get in touch with Members opposite.

Mr. Speaker: I think I have heard enough. This is a question which is in the public domain. Clearly the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) received some information, and in some cases did not receive other information which came to light at a later time.

There has been concern raised by the Hon. Member for Skeena that this might have been a deliberate attempt to keep information from a Member of Parliament. If that was the case and clearly there was evidence of that, then it would indeed be a very serious matter and understandable why the Hon. Member has raised this matter in this Chamber.

However, I have listened to the Minister and I have to take what Hon. Members in the House say as clearly in accord with the facts as they can know them, as I certainly did when listening to the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent).

I have listened to the Hon. Minister. There may very well be an argument under another proceeding as to what happened within the Department of National Defence. The whole question of why there were not records, if there are not, is something that can be pursued.

I must say to all Hon. Members that, in my view at least, listening to this as I have very carefully, it does not get into a question of privilege. It is essentially an argument over allegations of facts. While the matter as raised by the Hon. Member for Skeena is of course an important matter and it may be quite proper to pursue it in Question Period or at another time, I have to rule at the moment that it does not reach a question of privilege.