

PRIVILEGE

MR. LEWIS—PROTEST AGAINST TIMING OF
NATO STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege affecting this chamber. Your Honour will recall that on April 2, the day on which we adjourned for the Easter recess, I rose to protest the fact that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) did not then present the decision of the government regarding its review of defence policy, a decision that we were told had to be made public by April 10. Within 24 hours of the adjournment the Prime Minister did make such a statement outside the House of Commons.

There is no sense threshing over past affairs, but I rise now to protest just as vigorously the fact that the Prime Minister did not even find it necessary to rise in his place today and table the document which he presented to the press outside this chamber on Thursday, April 3. It seems to me that at least he should have had concern enough for the work of this parliament to want to make a very important document, one perhaps even more important in his mind than in the minds of some of us, part of our parliamentary work, part of *Hansard, Votes and Proceedings* or what not.

This is another example of—as I called it on April 2—the cavalier treatment of this house by the Prime Minister who, I repeat did not find it necessary at least to do what is demanded of a Prime Minister—that an important document given to the press be placed before this House of Commons with some explanation as to what it meant, so that there could be a minimum of discussion of what the government presented on Thursday, April 3 after parliament adjourned. I can find no words strong enough to condemn that kind of treatment of the House of Commons by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps if it is the wish of the house the Prime Minister may be allowed to reply. But at the same time, in my view, the hon. member for York South has raised a grievance rather than a question of privilege. In any event, his point was not followed by a motion and I do not think the matter should now be the subject of a debate. In view of this I would think it might be inadvisable to have a debate of any nature, even by way of a statement by the Prime Minister.

Questions

I hope hon. members will agree with my suggestion that in view of the fact that there is not, in my opinion, a question of privilege here, and particularly since the point raised by the hon. member for York South has not been followed by a motion, there is no question before the house and there should not be a debate at this time.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

*LANGUAGE COURSES—FRENCH AND ENGLISH

Question No. 1,102—**Mr. Beaudoin:**

1. Does the government intend to set up a program of English or French courses for employees in federal departments and, if so, when will these courses begin?

2. If not, does the government intend to make a study on the subject?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): I am informed by the Public Service Commission as follows: 1. The government, in 1963, authorized language training courses in the French and English languages (as second languages) for employees in the Public Service. These courses began early in 1964 and the number of such courses has been systematically increased as teaching resources became available in Ottawa and other major centres across Canada where the need for second language skills has been identified. These courses are operated under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission and are available to selected employees in all government departments and agencies and in a number of Crown corporations.

2. See 1 above.

[English]

THE EXPO EXPRESS

Question No. 1,182—**Mr. Beaudoin:**

1. What was the cost of the Expo-Express to (a) the City of Montreal (b) the Government of the Province of Quebec (c) the federal government?

2. Has the Expo-Express been sold and, if so, to whom was it sold and for what amount?

3. Were there conditions involved in the sale and, if so, what were these conditions?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): The Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition reports