

[English]

—Here we have a person who has been named by this government, I take it on the minister's authority, to sit on a board which is responsible for CBC administration, CBC being the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, a corporation dedicated to the unity of this country and a corporation dedicated, in my view, to explaining to Canadians the realities and possibly, even the duality of this country.

I received a statement yesterday which had been made by a Mr. John Crispo, a 1991 nominee of the government or of the minister to the Board of Governors of the CBC. I am trying to bring some light to this subject and some truth to these questions by having Mr. Crispo at least look at the facts before he puts out these damaging statements that he has made.

I want to read from the transcript of the *Majic 100* radio broadcast—

Mr. Cooper: Order.

Mr. Gauthier: It is important that you understand the facts or do you want to bury them? I heard a person call for order. The Speaker will—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment.

[Translation]

I have some problem with the question of privilege. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier asked a question during Oral Question Period and that question was addressed to the Prime Minister. Unless I am mistaken, I thought that the question did not deal with government administration. Upon reflection, it may be so or it may not, but I still do not have the transcript before me. However, if the hon. member wishes, I can consider his position and I might be able to hear his arguments tomorrow. That being said, I do not believe it would be appropriate now for the hon. member to present arguments concerning all the details relating to the situation. Naturally, since the question is very important, the hon. member might consider it more appropriate to give me the opportunity to examine the precise question. Afterwards, I might be able to make a decision.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to pursue that issue. If you want to take the matter under advise-

Privilege

ment, it is up to you. However, I would like to state clearly that as members of the opposition, we have the right to ask the government questions on issues strictly related to the administration of this government. Again, I refer you to paragraph 6 of citation 359:

A question must be within the administrative competence of the Government.

I believe that all members of the opposition now ask themselves what criteria apply, since, based on my understanding of it, we no longer have the latitude to ask the government questions. The Prime Minister is the leader of that government and if he sees fit to refer the question to one of his ministers, that is his decision, not mine. However, I do know, that it is not fair to leave a question unanswered today, because tomorrow we will not know if the questions we asked meet the new criteria just stated. With all due respect I find it difficult, Mr. Speaker, to understand your argument.

[English]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the point of privilege raised by my friend from Vanier.

The issue, Mr. Speaker, as I understood it, and I agreed with your observation, was whether the question was in order in terms of what is appropriate to be put in Question Period.

Historically this has been a period during which members sought information from the government about government operations. We know that it has expanded to a time period each day where members call the government to account for actions of the government within the competence of government.

• (1510)

What we have here is a statement made by an individual who is a member of the Board of Governors of a Crown corporation. Basically it was asking about the propriety of that question. It opens all kinds of questions, whether it is appropriate to suggest that someone in that capacity has no right to say things which are offensive. They have every right to say whatever they choose. It would be most inappropriate for the government to attempt to censor the comments made by anybody in that position. This on its face would make the representation inappropriate.