

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 7, 1973

The House met at 2 p.m.

## PRIVILEGE

MR. ANDRAS—COMMENTS BY MEMBER FOR LOTBINIÈRE

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising from certain comments by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) last evening during the debate, as recorded in *Hansard* on page 1024 on yesterday's proceedings. I would have raised the matter last night except that I was not listening intently at the moment he made these comments and, in fact, was not then using the translation equipment available. When the words were brought to my attention later I chose to wait until I could confirm them by reading *Hansard* today.

I do protest, through you, Sir, the use of certain words found in the following passage:

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would not like to pass this opportunity to say to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) that he is incompetent and irresponsible and that he is deliberately misleading the House.

I would disagree but would not argue in terms of parliamentary usage with the use of the words "incompetent and irresponsible" but I most certainly do protest the words "he is deliberately misleading the House", which I on no occasion have done or would consider doing.

[Translation]

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. minister has given notice of his intention to raise a question of privilege. The hon. minister and the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) and their colleagues know that some expressions are deemed out of order in parliament, particularly if they are offensive and likely to give rise to debates and discussions not in keeping with parliamentary tradition. Of course sometimes, during a debate, some hon. members are prone to using expressions which not only go beyond their thought but may seem offensive to those involved. That is the opinion of the hon. minister. I must, however, point out to him that an objection of one hon. member to terms used by another is rather a point of order than a point of privilege. Usage is quite clear in this respect. A member can rise on a point of order concerning offensive language. There is no doubt that the language the minister has mentioned is out of order. I refer hon. members to citations 155, 156 and the following of the fourth edition of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms. Citation 156 reads in part as follows:

The proper time for interference is when the offensive expressions are uttered, and not afterwards; and it may take place, either on the Speaker's voluntary motion, or on the call to order of the member assailed, or of some other member, or the general call of the House.

In any event, I shall have to study the words in question, and have a look at *Hansard*, after which I shall decide whether or not I should intervene. However, knowing the hon. member for Lotbinière and his respect for the rules of this House, I am sure he is not of those who, normally, would use offensive language or words which could be considered as such by the hon. member to whom they are addressed.

I thank the minister for having brought this matter to my attention. I shall study it at the first opportunity.

MR. LAMBERT (BELLECHASSE)—AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS OF RIDING REDISTRIBUTION COMMISSION

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question of privilege concerning the revision of electoral boundaries which has followed the census of Quebec in 1971.

The federal electoral boundaries commission for Quebec has published a notice that public hearings would be held in various locations in the province to hear representations from those interested.

Mr. Speaker, I consider that an hon. member is certainly interested in stating before this commission his viewpoint and that of his constituents. To do this properly it would only be normal that he be acquainted with the records of the commission and briefs submitted during the previous revision which has ended in the establishment of the electoral map which has been in force since 1968.

In fact, although elected by the people, a member cannot have access to the documents of the commission, which in my view denies him his privileges. I feel that if we expect a member to keep the people informed he should be able to delve into the major reasons warranting changes made in 1968 so as to be able to appreciate adequately the changes proposed by the commission.

For that purpose, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin):

That an Order of the House be given to the federal electoral boundaries commission in Quebec to make available to the members of the House the documents of the said commission since 1965.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Bellechasse has also given notice that he wanted to raise a question of privilege at the beginning of this sitting. I very seriously considered the point at issue and unfortunately I had to conclude that it is not essentially a question of privilege. I must say that I had some doubts in this connection and that I have given this motion a more serious and thorough consideration than I usually do under other circumstances because I thought that perhaps it was a borderline case which was perhaps a real question of privilege.