

Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) says, "Go on". It seems to me that that hon. member, being one of the critics in this regard, should be more responsible in terms of knowing how a mediator's services are applied and how they work. Let me conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I urge those concerned with the resolution of this dispute to explore all possibilities of solution in a co-operative effort with the mediator.

● (1220)

Having regard to the question raised yesterday, I would respectfully submit that all members who have spoken, other than the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Stollery), should check the preamble to the hon. member's question posed yesterday in respect of me personally, because once again he did not know what he was talking about in that regard. This is the answer that I gave as reported at page 28 of *Hansard* dated October 10, 1979:

I want to give the hon. member credit for asking the question because I am also concerned about the matter, but I want to point out to him that at this very moment the mediator, Mr. Rolland Doucet, is meeting with the parties involved in a private way and having meaningful discussions. Progress is being made. For me to say anything further at this particular time would be unproductive.

It is not up to me to try to hide the facts or flim-flam or bamboozle anybody. My way of answering that question was a sincere attempt to make members more knowledgeable about the situation. If there was anything wrong with my answer at that particular time, it is the words "this very moment", and if that is what the hon. member is referring to, I must agree. Perhaps I got carried away in terms of answering the question, but it still does not deny the fact that discussions and meetings have been held with other parties and that meetings have been held with the parties.

I notice that the hon. member who spoke after the hon. member for Nickel Belt is nodding in the affirmative; in other words, he is agreeing that discussions and meetings have been held. If it will make members more confident with respect to my knowledge or lack of knowledge regarding my department—incidentally, I am not concerned about what they think of my knowledge or lack of knowledge with regard to my department—those are the facts.

I am here to do my job and I can tell hon. members that I am going to do the job and that this work stoppage is of concern to all of us. I would hope that those who are on the outside looking in, particularly the parties to the dispute and the mediator, get on the ball and resolve the matter as quickly as possible, because we all know what must be done in the long run.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, if it will make members happier and if it will remove that cloud which has been cast upon my integrity, I will withdraw that point and the words "this very moment". Discussions and meetings were held with the parties, and I hope that my integrity remains intact as a result of that very important concession. There was no intent—

An hon. Member: Order.

[Mr. Alexander.]

Mr. Alexander: This gives me the opportunity to make my maiden speech.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Alexander: There was no intent to mislead anyone in this House. I am here to give hon. members the facts and I will try my best to give the facts.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. members, I am sure, have realized for some time during the course of the discussion that what was at stake was a disagreement with respect to the kind of answer and the content of the answer given yesterday by the minister. The minister has said that he stands by his answer with the exception of a specific interpretative part, "this very moment". It is clearly a dispute between the parties and does not constitute a question of privilege.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

SUPPLY

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 1978-79

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, by leave, I would like to table a report to the House of Commons on Supplementary Estimates (B) 1978-79 which shows how the items in these estimates were financed. Since some items were paid under authority of a special warrant, special reference to this effect will be included in the next appropriation bill. I have three more documents to table.

Mr. Speaker, by leave, I would like to table a report, in both official languages, to the House of Commons showing the special warrants issued under section 23 of the Financial Administration Act following the dissolution of Parliament on March 26, 1979, in accordance with Standing Order 41(2).

MAIN ESTIMATES, 1979-80

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am retabling the 1979-80 Main Estimates, and I have a message from His Excellency the Governor General signed by his own hand.

[Translation]

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Main Estimates of sums required for the service of Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, and in accordance with the provisions of the British North America