

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Madam Speaker, each year the estimates of the Post Office Department are referred to a parliamentary committee. Obviously, I would not want to shirk that obligation, and I will be pleased to appear before the committee along with department officials to answer any question from hon. members on both sides of the House.

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[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PROHIBITION ON PUBLICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC "REACTION SHOTS"

Madam Speaker: I have received inquiries from several hon. members about a photograph taken in the House of Commons which appeared in several newspapers this morning and yesterday. The taking of this photograph is a breach of the agreement which was made between the Canadian Press and the photographers who have been allowed to come into the House. In terms of the electronic journal, the picture constituted what is called in the trade jargon, a reaction shot. Since such shots are not allowed to be taken by the electronic journal, they cannot be allowed to be taken by the photographers who take pictures in the House.

The first thing I did this morning was to contact the director of the Canadian Press. I let him know that I felt such photographs could not be taken in the House, that only the hon. member who is addressing the House may be photographed and that, although we allow shoulder shots, those shoulder shots must be taken from the front, that we want the face of the hon. member who is addressing the House to show, and not the back of the hon. member. To answer the queries I received from hon. members, I have dealt with the matter.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, in regard to my concern over the lines of authority required for the release of those photographs, I am informed by some of the photographers behind the curtain that the photographs are released only upon your authority. Since the entire exercise takes the nature of an experiment, it seems to me that before any hon. member's picture is published in the press the hon. member should be consulted or, at least, give blanket permission. I am concerned about this area because some still photographs may be taken which are not reaction shots but yet are not in keeping with the principles of electronic *Hansard*, and which an hon. member may not wish to have published.

Perhaps, Madam Speaker, you could consult with the House leaders some time in the near future with regard to guidelines for the release of any of the still photographs which are being taken during the experimental stage.

Madam Speaker: I share the concern of the hon. member. While I suppose it is true that those photographs are published under my authority or with my permission, I do not believe that I could check on a daily basis what photographs will be

Privilege—Mr. W. Baker and Mr. Nielsen

sent out. This being an experiment, obviously there will be some incidents of this nature, and I hope that they will not recur. We were able to determine with the photographers what we consider to be in conformity with the principles of electronic *Hansard*.

I was not in the chair at the time television was introduced into the House, but I suppose that from time to time there was some exchange between those responsible for the broadcasting of the proceedings in the House, the Chair, and the House leaders, as to what was acceptable and what was not acceptable. We will have to follow this same procedure with regard to the still photographs. I can assure the hon. member that even before I received inquiries from hon. members with regard to this particular photograph, I was on the phone to the director of Canadian Press. I saw the photograph while reading my paper early this morning, and I immediately came to the conclusion that we could not allow the taking of such photographs. I will accept the suggestion of the hon. member and discuss the matter with the House leaders, and also with the Canadian Press authorities.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. BAKER (NEPEAN-CARLETON)—STATEMENT MADE BY MR. KAPLAN
MR. NIELSEN—CONSEQUENCES OF MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND UNDERTAKINGS

Madam Speaker: I am prepared to rule on the two questions of privilege which were raised this week, one by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) concerning an exchange which occurred during question period, and the other by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), which was rather closely related to the first question of privilege, although it was phrased in more general terms, indeed it was of a rather general nature.

I must say that the arguments I heard Wednesday did not sway the ruling I was prepared to make on that day, but I delayed the announcement of my ruling because the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton was not in the House at the time. Last Tuesday the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton rose on a question of privilege concerning statements reflecting upon the trustworthiness, the integrity, the honesty and the reliability of certain ministers of the Crown. However, it is quite clear that the hon. member did not make any definite accusation in that sense.

As I am bound to do, I listened very carefully to the remarks of hon. members—several took the floor to enlarge upon this question of privilege—more particularly upon that raised by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton who, it would seem, rested his arguments on a statement allegedly made by the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) before the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada. The hon. member also