

Privilege—Mr. McGrath

before I give the hon. gentleman an answer I shall look it up.

Mr. Horner: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, so that I may clarify the point for the minister. Is Canada's central bank prepared to go as far as the central bank of the United States and suggest that the growth of Canada's money supply for next year will be limited to 5 per cent or 7 per cent to control inflation?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, there are some risks in suggesting a target like that. Arthur Burns admitted that before Congress.

Mr. Horner: Are you prepared to risk it?

* * *

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

ALLEGED LEAK OF CABINET DOCUMENT—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister in his capacity as President of the Privy Council. On May 6 during a meeting in which officials of Central Mortgage and Housing, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the National Indian Brotherhood were participants, a document identified as a secret cabinet discussion paper was circulated and debated. The document left the room and found its way to the press. This occurrence bears a striking resemblance to a similar situation—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a question, perhaps he would put it to the minister.

Mr. Oberle: My question is to the President of the Privy Council. Has the government changed its position in regard to secret cabinet documents from that which resulted in the firing of a senior official last year or will the leak result in the firing of similar officials this time?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, if the government should find that there had been a deliberate leak of a document by a senior civil servant I think that would be grounds for dismissal.

Mr. Oberle: A supplementary question. Has the occurrence of May 6 been the subject of discussion in cabinet and is any action contemplated at this time? If not, does the government intend to reinstate Mr. Rudniki or offer him a settlement out of court, since his situation is identical to that which just occurred?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the statement of the hon. gentleman. If any senior civil servant deliberately leaks a document then that is good ground for dismissal.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East on a question of privilege.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege has to do with a reply given to me in the House today by the Minister of National Health and

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

Welfare (Mr. Lalonde). The minister has left the House; whether he did so deliberately or by inadvertence is not for me to say.

Yesterday in the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs I was pursuing a question with the minister regarding his responsibilities in face of the fact that there are no regulations or statutes in the province of Quebec to protect Quebec consumers from having to buy tainted and contaminated meat placed on the market for human consumption. Let me quote the minister's reply. According to the transcript in my possession he said:

● (1500)

There is provincial legislation . . . I refer you to the Dead Meat Act of Quebec. I do not know whether you are aware of it and the regulations under the Dead Meat Act in Quebec. Are you aware of this particular legislation?

The minister, of course, today denied saying that, or implied he had not said it. I will deal with that in a moment.

I checked with the provincial department of agriculture of the province of Quebec and was told that there is no Dead Meat Act in Quebec. That is my first point. Further, today the minister when replying referred, I think, to the health regulations in Quebec. I was told by the same source in Quebec that there are no such regulations, or that those regulations are not in effect, and cannot prevent anyone in Quebec from placing tainted or contaminated meat on the market.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. McGrath: I submit that the minister has great responsibility in this field, as the regulations under Bill 31, the only legislation which affords any degree of protection to consumers under the jurisdiction of the province of Quebec, have not been proclaimed. In other words, there are not any regulations for protecting Quebec consumers. This makes it all the more necessary for the Minister of National Health and Welfare to discharge his obligations to the people of Quebec, obligations spelled out in the Food and Drugs Act, and give those people the protection they deserve as citizens of this country. I submit, without debating the point—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: —that the minister, as I have shown, misled the committee yesterday, and today stood in his place and, in replying to my question, misled the House.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I do not have the advantage of having before me a transcript of the committee discussions of yesterday, but I submit that if the hon. member were to read a little further on, and not stop where he stopped, he would see that I corrected that answer later in my testimony. I noticed that I should not have referred to the Dead Meat Act, but to the regulations regarding dead meat, which come under the Public Health Act of the province of Quebec. This is in the record; I remember having said that. I will check carefully, and if it is not there I apologize to the hon. member. There is a Public Health Act in force in Quebec which is chapter 21 of the