

Privilege—Mr. Fortin

Now, Mr. Speaker, here is where our privileges are violated.

In Langelier and Louis-Hébert, the candidates already identified and campaigning at the time of the program were Liberals Lamontagne and Dawson and Conservatives Hamel and Lavoie. Apparently the third parties had not yet fielded candidates.

So far, this is true.

In Terrebonne—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) and to refer him to the provisions of the rules of the House, and in particular to Standing Order 17 which reads as follows:

17.(2) Unless notice of motion has been given under Standing Order 42, any Member proposing to raise a question of privilege other than one arising out of proceedings in the Chamber during the course of a sitting shall give to the Speaker a written statement of the question at least one hour prior to the opening of a sitting.

I shall particularly underline for the hon. member Standing Order 17 (2). Unfortunately, in the absence of the formal notice described in this subsection, it is impossible at this time to hear a question of privilege.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I could not give you a notice in accordance with the rules of the House, because I have just received this answer. This is a question of urgent and pressing necessity since the by-election is underway and since this discrimination objected to by the Secretary of State himself and the Prime Minister is continuing.

Mr. Speaker, I raised myself that very question in the House. As I was saying:

In Terrebonne, two leading personalities are engaged in the by-election bout, Liberal Comtois and Conservative Delorme. Our reporting related to the campaign already launched and to the fight that was already going on.

Mr. Speaker, I contend that it is Radio-Canada management which decides by-election results. They decide to eliminate systematically Social Credit candidates from their information programs. Our candidate for Terrebonne has been nominated since March 9. This information was conveyed by Telbec to Radio-Canada as well as other electronic media during a press conference which was held in Sainte-Thérèse city hall. Therefore, Radio-Canada was aware of that fact. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State undertook to inquire about that fact so as to ensure that our party was being fairly treated. Is there or is there not any democracy in this country, Mr. Speaker?

Radio-Canada decides by-election results by ignoring Social Credit nominations in its news bulletin. That is how they totally ignored our candidate in their letter. And moreover, Mr. Speaker, the letter states the following:

In Verdun, our reporting insisted particularly on the nomination of a surprise candidate from the NDP, a well known personality among consumers.

No mention is being made of Liberal, Progressive Conservative and surely not of Social Credit candidates. Mr. Speaker, Radio-Canada has no right to interfere in the democratic rules of this country.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is obvious that the hon. member for Lotbinière is not raising a question a privilege

[Mr. Fortin.]

under the Standing Orders, but he certainly makes a grievance, maybe against Radio-Canada. The grievance was adequately set out by the hon. member this afternoon. He expressed himself in strong and clear terms. When recognizing the hon. member for Lotbinière, I gave him, I think, a very reasonable opportunity to formulate and air his grievances against Radio-Canada but it is in no way a question of privilege, in the sense of the rules regarding the rights of members of the House. Perhaps this is a grievance introduced by a political party which does not involve the executive or the government in the House, as far as procedure is concerned, but a grievance from a political party against Radio-Canada. The grievance was well handled, expressed and set out very clearly and vigorously by the hon. member for Lotbinière, but technically this is not a question of privilege.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[*English*]

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order prompted by the exchange between the House leader of our party, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton, and the Postmaster General who occasionally, when he is not looking after the Post Office, doubles as deputy House leader. It involves the very serious issue which involves the opposition day tomorrow and the motion in the name of the government House leader dated May 11, 1977, dealing with the question of northern pipelines. If we are to believe the press releases and other information from the New Democratic Party—the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre nods his head, and I give to the nod of his head the same acceptance as if it were made under oath—

An hon. Member: He is just clearing his ears.

Mr. Baldwin: —the issue tomorrow will be a question dealing with the Berger report on these pipelines. This is a very important issue for parliament and this country. We all have reason to believe that the Prime Minister has made a secret agreement with President Carter.

An hon. Member: Oh, come on.

Mr. Baldwin: During the time this House will be in recess the government will make decisions which will be irrevocable. We in this House demand the right to debate and discuss this matter, to move amendments and to put questions. This question was raised yesterday and the day before. An indication was made by the government House leader that some opportunity would be given for this. If that is the case, it may well be that the motion appearing in the name of the President of the Privy Council represents that view of the government and that that is the decision. If that is the case, we should be advised, because tomorrow we will be debating an issue on which there will be a vote and which is subject to amendment, and by that vote and by that amendment we may be binding ourselves to a very narrow issue and preventing ourselves from debating the rather broader issue which the government may want to raise.