

Privilege—Mr. Jelinek

evaluated and questions were being asked in the House of Commons. Again, the appropriate questions apparently had been put to the Assistant Deputy Registrar General who ruled that, in fact, all the guidelines were being followed. Subsequently there were public inquiries and so on.

I suggest that when facts such as this are brought to our attention, Question Period is the forum provided for by the Standing Orders to give the opportunity to ask legitimate questions seeking information.

In conclusion, if Members of Parliament cannot exercise their very basic privilege to rise in the House to seek information from the appropriate Minister, then what is the point of having Question Period, and what kind of questions can be pursued?

Mr. Jelinek: You should not smear members in the process.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I wish to respond to the Hon. House Leader of the New Democratic Party. Clearly, questions are allowable and that is the purpose of Question Period. Innuendo and the imputation of motives clearly are not allowable.

I believe if the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis), who is a very reasonable and thoughtful Member of Parliament, were to reread the questions and the underlying imputations, he would find that there are certainly some very clear accusations. I want to outline two or three of them.

Inherent in the question is an accusation that the Minister did not make reference to a \$354,000 mortgage or arrangement for the transaction. That information was clearly available. It was public information and public knowledge. The member could have had it if he wanted it.

Mr. Cassidy: I did. It is in the Registry Office.

Mr. Mazankowski: The details of it are clearly there.

Mr. Cassidy: The file is not open to Members of Parliament.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is clearly there.

Mr. Cassidy: The file is not open to Members of Parliament.

Mr. Mazankowski: The ADRG indicated that at no time did the—he selectively extract information to use for his own political purpose.

Mr. Cassidy: Question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: There is some dispute between the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) and the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski). Of course, I will hear the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre if he wishes to respond to anything that the Hon. Minister has said. In the meantime, perhaps we could get on with the remarks. If there are Members on both sides who feel a great need to get involved in this debate I will, of course, recognize them and they can address their remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Mazankowski: The point I am making is that the Hon. Member sought not to ascertain all the facts. He selectively pulled out information to use for his own benefit. I repeat, the details of the transaction are clearly available.

He also accuses the Minister of breaching the guidelines.

Mr. Cassidy: That is imputing motives.

Mr. Mazankowski: That is clearly unfounded because the Hon. Minister has clearly put on the record today the fact that he has complied with all the guidelines. Perhaps when the Hon. Member has a chance to read it he might change his mind.

He also accuses him of commercial speculation. There is no commercial speculation in this particular transaction. The Hon. Member lived in the apartment in question. He owned it since 1980, I believe. It was something that he had, long before he became a Minister of the Crown. Therefore, there was no loan or no action on the part of the Minister which would involve any speculation or any commercial activity.

He also accuses the Minister, in the course of his question, of managing or operating a business or commercial activity which is a violation of Section 29 of the code. That is totally false.

What is really more important is that the Hon. Member went outside the House and stated, "The Minister, who according to the Code of Conduct is not meant to be carrying on any commercial activity, is engaged in a speculative mortgage loan with respect to a property in downtown Ottawa". He has gone outside the House and repeated it. It is very clear that the Minister is in compliance and it is not a breach.

When these kinds of accusations are made, there is a longstanding tradition in the House that the Member can surely feel free to make such an allegation, but in the course of that he usually puts up his seat as a challenge, to show that he is serious about what he is suggesting. Failing that, I suggest that the Hon. Member has no choice but to either withdraw the innuendo and the allegations that have been made, directly or indirectly, and apologize, or we have the opportunity to have the matter aired fully before the respective Standing Committee. That is the purport of the motion.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise two matters at this time. First, I am sure in reviewing the question and answer on page 5094 of yesterday's *Hansard* that you will find indeed that the Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) did not in any way impinge on the privilege of the Hon. Minister. His questions were direct. They may not be questions that the Minister likes, but they were questions that Members of Parliament should legitimately ask in the House of Commons.

The issue itself was in the public domain before Question Period. The Member for Ottawa Centre, in his statement to the House a few minutes ago, explained that he did go out of his way to research this area. He notified the Minister's office of his intent, and when he found out that the Minister was not here he notified the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) of his intent to raise the issue. While those actions are not necessary, they are a courtesy that the Member for Ottawa Centre extended to ensure that the Minister or, in his absence, the Deputy Prime Minister had an opportunity to be aware that the issue was to be raised and to be in a position to answer those allegations.