

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Laing: Mr. Speaker, I regret that the hon. member has implied that the extremely valuable services rendered by people appointed to the council from southern Canada do not meet with his approval. I consider they have been of great value to the north. I would expect that over a period of time—and I do not know how soon it might be—the practice would be eliminated. This may well be—although again I do not want to be precise—the last occasion on which appointments would be made from southern Canada.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ALLEGED VIOLATION OF OATH BY MEMBER FOR LAPOINTE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the fact that Your Honour and all other members of this house have solemnly sworn on oath to bear allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen and country and in view of the fact that as a result of his seditious actions the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) not only has violated his oath but has placed the honour of every member of the house in question, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether any action has been initiated against the hon. member for Lapointe and, if not, do integrity and loyalty still have relevance to our position as public servants?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member's question is a form of reflection upon another member and certainly is one which cannot be accepted.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, on a point or order.

I note that the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) has made general charges without giving any details; I believe that in the circumstances it would be quite normal to ask him either to give details or retract his charges that I might have broken some oath.

Mr. Speaker, if I am accused in the house of having broken my oath then you must ask him either to retract or to give details and prove his charges.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

[Mr. Nielsen.]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Owing to the fact that we have just about reached the end of the question period I wonder whether the matter might be left in abeyance.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as you gave the member for Lapointe an opportunity to speak, it seems to me I have the same right of privilege.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: May I suggest to the hon. member for Red Deer—and to the hon. member for Lapointe that, for the time being, it would be simpler to leave the question in abeyance because—

[*English*]

—we have reached the end of the question period. I think at this time we should get on with the important business which is to be considered by the house this afternoon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. Regardless of whether the question period is coming to an end or not, one thing remains: I have been accused, in this house, of having broken some oath or other and this surely constitutes grounds for a question of privilege. The question period to my mind, is not a matter of hours or minutes. I was accused of having broken some oath or other. That is my question of privilege and I ask that the member take back what he said.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest to the hon. member—and I am not saying there is no question of privilege—I merely suggest that the dispute should be left in abeyance. The hon. member must recognize that the Speaker has the right to postpone a ruling, if he so wishes, and that is what I wish to do at this time.

I will have the opportunity to consider both the arguments of the hon. member for Red Deer and the question of privilege raised by the hon. member.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Section 17 of standing orders states that:

Whenever any matter of privilege arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately.

Now, Your Honour has just stated that the question of privilege I raised was well justified.