

Privilege—Mr. Lalonde

and that is the main point. The second point is that *Reader's Digest* may have used some other conference—which is not certain, obviously—as the source of its material, and the minister now seeks to put on the record the contents of that conference. I think the House has to take the minister's word as to what he said at that time, but I think it would be extending procedures too much to permit him now to read into the record his statements at that time.

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, the statement which has been attributed to me made specific reference to certain percentages which I did refer to during the press conference. I have with me the actual text of what was said, and I submit, with respect, that in order to make sure that the House will have the full story, that I can make my question of privilege quite clear and that there will be no doubt later on about what was said, I should be allowed to put on the record a short excerpt of what I actually said. I want there to be no doubt about what was said on this particular subject. I think it is very relevant to the point of this debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If we were dealing with a situation in which the source had been identified in the newspaper or magazine article—for example, a statement by the minister—I think the minister would be entitled to read that statement into the record. However, that is not in fact the case. It is a slightly different case. The minister is saying, in the first place, that he gave no interview to the magazine and, in the second place, that the only source, therefore, must have been some press conference. The minister therefore wishes to read his comments at that press conference into the record. I think the minister is entitled—as he has done or may wish to do—to give to the House a précis of what he said at that time, but I do not think he is entitled to read now the record of that press conference.

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, what I indicated quite clearly was that four-fifths of what the Parti Québécois was proposing could be implemented under the existing constitution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: As far as the rest was concerned, it could be implemented via discussions with the federal government—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde:—and in no case could there be negotiations about sovereignty-association. I therefore regret that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has been unable to find bedfellows for the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) and the Leader of the Opposition, who have been saying that they would negotiate sovereignty-association and that they would rather negotiate with Mr. Lévesque than with Mr. Ryan. We on this side of the House will leave flimflamming and flip-flopping to the Conservative party.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1510)

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, on the same question of privilege, having listened to the minister's explanation of the quotation I gave in the House yesterday, I can only confirm that he, indeed, is confirming the very words I used.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: I would like to point out to the minister, sir, that the reason I raised it, and the reason I know he is now presenting it as a question of privilege, is that when he used the terms "four-fifths of the Parti Québécois program" and "one-fifth of the Parti Québécois program"—in fact, the document issued by the Parti Québécois, which means the Parti Québécois program is called "Programme Officiel du Parti Québécois"—the program of the Parti Québécois includes a great many things which I hope the minister, indeed, would never negotiate or would never want to see implemented.

That program, in effect, says, according to him, that the Government of Canada would agree to the admission of the province of Quebec to the United Nations; that the Government of Canada, according to the minister, would agree to have all the fiscal policies and all the taxes paid to the Government of Canada transferred to the government of Quebec. That program of which he says four-fifths would be implemented under federalism and one-fifth he could negotiate would include the transfer of all Arctic lands above Quebec to the province of Quebec.

That is the reason, sir, I raised the question. I wanted to give the minister an opportunity to deny it. He did not deny it yesterday and he has not denied it today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: In terms of the procedural disposition of the matter raised by the minister, it is a common aspect of our practice here that members who feel themselves aggrieved in this way by an inaccurate or improper reporting have the opportunity to rise and say so in the House. Those involved have been given a brief opportunity to do that. It is not within the classical definition of privilege unless the reporting is contemptuous of a member or contemptuous of the House. The hon. minister has indicated that the article which was referred to was not as a result of an interview with him. I think that is a very serious aspect of the matter which ought not to be overlooked.

If it was reported in such a way as to indicate that it was as a result of an interview, that would be a matter of a rather serious grievance. Nevertheless, whether it goes that route or beyond it, it still does not in my view constitute a contempt of the House or a contempt of the member. Therefore, on strict procedural grounds the matter does not fall within a question of privilege, and I think is concluded from that point of view.