

into that. If the hon. member has a point of order, I can hear it, but I will not allow him to reflect on my ruling.

**Mr. Malone:** Madam Speaker, what I am saying—and I wanted to come to this in my next sentence—is that you obviously have ruled; I cannot challenge that, but I submit that you had to rule the way you ruled, in accordance with the rules we have in Parliament.

However, I do not believe that that takes away from the fact that there is a general feeling that there has been a privilege given to people in the media which has been denied to Members of Parliament. It is therefore necessary—

**Madam Speaker:** I am sorry. I have to call the hon. member back to order because he is still arguing the case. I assume he really does not have a point of order. I will have to recognize the hon. member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn).

**Mr. Malone:** Madam Speaker—

**Madam Speaker:** I have recognized the hon. member for Mississauga South.

**Mr. Malone:** I have not come to my conclusion.

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. member for Mississauga South.

**Mr. McKnight:** I think you have now.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Madam Speaker, on the point of order, I was there at the time with my colleague, the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington), and there was indeed a telephone call made to the deputy secretary of the Treasury Board, who ordered his officials to make sure that the hon. member for Capilano and I were excluded.

**Madam Speaker:** Order. I think we have heard that argument. The hon. member has to recognize that he is still arguing the question of privilege.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** I have not argued yet.

**Madam Speaker:** The question is being argued. I am awfully sorry, but I think I will now have to hear the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae).

MR. RAE—ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES AND MISLEADING ANSWERS BY MINISTERS—MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RIDINGS

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, I gave notice to the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and to the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) some time ago that I intended to raise the matter of the discrepancy between the answers which the Minister of Finance gave to me on Thursday, February 19, and answers given to me on Wednesday, February 18 by the Solicitor General with respect to the question of the appointment of ministers of the Crown responsible for individual ridings.

*Privilege—Mr. Rae*

Your Honour will recall that on February 18 I raised in the House the question of a letter addressed to a constituent of mine by the Solicitor General in which he described himself as the minister responsible for the riding of Broadview-Greenwood. I then asked a question the next day of the Minister of Finance with respect to the responsibilities of individual ministers and, as recorded at page 7455 of *Hansard*, the Minister of Finance said:

First of all, Madam Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that the Government of Canada does not believe that any minister has been given responsibility for representing, in this House of Commons, any riding other than the riding for which he has been elected. That is the view of the Government of Canada.

What I would like to tell the hon. member is that ministers for various regions of the country have special responsibilities within the cabinet for representing the interests of those regions.

There then followed an exchange in which the minister reiterated at several points the fact that there were appointments made with respect to regions but that there was no attempt on the part of the government to usurp the functions of individual Members of Parliament. It seems to me that the answer which was given by the minister is in direct contradiction to the answer given the day before by the Solicitor General, and in fact is in direct contradiction to the letter which went out over the signature of the Solicitor General, because in that letter the Solicitor General did not describe himself as the minister responsible for a particular region, he described himself as the minister responsible for a particular riding. That riding happens to be mine, so naturally I have a certain interest in the nature of his correspondence with respect to this question.

That is my first question of privilege. The first point of the argument is that the Minister of Finance described ministers as being appointed to take care of regions, and then he proceeded to give me a lecture in civics and on the fact that there were certain ministers responsible in the cabinet for certain regions, and so forth.

My point here is that this answer is in direct contradiction to what are on their very face accepted as facts. A letter went out. In that letter the minister described himself not as the minister responsible for regions but as the minister responsible for my riding.

My second question of privilege has to do with the nature of the answer given by the Minister of Finance in which he described the duties of these so-called regional ministers, and the duties were that they were to represent at the cabinet table regions which required representation and which individual members of Parliament could not represent in cabinet. He then went on to speak about the case of a large grant in the province of Nova Scotia for Michelin and referred to the fact that the hon. member for Annapolis Valley-Hants (Mr. Nowlan) was not a member of the cabinet and therefore could not be there.

The implication of that answer is that the duty of these ministers is to represent regions with respect to major items of policy affecting those regions.