

Privilege—Mr. Smith

Mr. MacGuigan:—wants me to reply to a question at this point I would be very happy to do so.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Madam Speaker: I am afraid Oral Question Period is over and I cannot allow any further questions.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, what is of concern to us—and this issue has been raised before—is that this government has developed the practice of moving away from statements on motions which allow the House of Commons to be the place in which policy is first announced. This denies members of the House of Commons the opportunity to reply to policy announcements. We were given a clear indication by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacGuigan) that he intended to make a statement. We naturally interpreted this to be a statement in the normal course, a statement on motions. He is now backing away from that commitment. In backing away from it he is repeating a pattern of this government by refusing to allow the House of Commons to deal in the first instance with matters which should be raised here, particularly when a promise was given. I hope that promise was not rhetorical, tongue-in-cheek or less than candid.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, since reference was made to a statement I made in a press conference yesterday, I want to inform the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) that I did not make a statement at that press conference. I merely answered questions. A question was asked of me and I gave the answer. I think every day of the week the Leader of the Opposition and his cohorts have the opportunity to do the same, if they can think as fast as members of the press.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, I really want to say it is not my understanding that I made any kind of commitment to the House, certainly not as to a statement of motions. But I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I will be prepared to answer a question with respect to this matter on Monday. I will not make any statement outside the House until then.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. SMITH—RADIO ADVERTISEMENT

Mr. David Smith (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, my question of privilege is one which I believe relates to all members of the House. I am referring to a radio advertisement which is currently being broadcast on Canadian stations. I myself heard it on a Toronto station. I believe it constitutes a slur on the integrity of all Members of Parliament, in that it sets out a fact situation which, if it were the case, would constitute an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada. The advertisement is a 60-second clip.

I have a transcript of it here and with your indulgence, Madam Speaker, I would like to read it into the record. It is a conversation between a person called "Jiffy", who is allegedly the owner of a supermarket, and a person called "Miles Pleasant", who describes himself as "your local MP" It goes as follows:

Jiffy here!

Jiffy, this is your local MP, Miles Pleasant.

Oh?

I have received a complaint from a customer of yours, a Mrs. Meanswell.

Oh, yeah?

Says they've misplaced the Highliner fillets in sauce!

Misplaced them! But they're here in the Highliner case file under "Fish".

She says they should be with the other frozen entrees like frozen lasagna . . .

But . . . but . . .

Now see here, Jiffy, they're tender white fillets covered in yummy sauce. You just eat 'em and eat 'em. I ate 'em, so I know.

Yes, but . . .

Mrs. Meanswell suggests the very least you can do is to put up a sign saying, "If you're looking for Highliner fillets in sauce, they're not here!"

What?!

Oh, about your application to build a parking lot adjacent to your supermarket, it's on my desk right now . . .

Oh, I see . . .

The Meanswells are great, uh, friends of mine.

I'll look into it sir.

Then there is music and the advertisement ends up by asking: "Will Mr. Jiffy get his parking lot? Will he put up the sign at the frozen entree case saying, If you're looking for Highliner fillets in sauce, they're not here"?

I would submit that constitutes a prima facie case of contempt of the integrity of Parliament.

I have looked at a number of precedents. I do not intend to cite all of them, but I would like to refer to one made by the Hon. T. C. Douglas in a debate on Thursday, June 4, 1964, at page 3917 of *Hansard*. He is referring to a press report and this is what he says:

I do not raise this on any basis of personal resentment, Mr. Speaker. I say this is a reflection on the integrity of all members of the House. What is to my mind even worse, it helps to feed the cheap cynicism that is all too prevalent with reference to Parliament and its membership.

That is the same way I felt with respect to this ad when I heard it on the radio. I would submit that it is, in fact, an affront to Parliament and all its members and that we have a prima facie case of contempt of the House.

● (1210)

Madam Speaker: I will look into the advertisement, and examine it to see whether it really reflects on the ethics of parliamentarians. I will rule on the matter later.

MR. NIELSEN—STATEMENT BY MR. CHÉNIER

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I rise on a brief question of privilege which arose out of the proceedings during the adjournment debate last night when I spoke to the question of federal land dispositions in the Yukon. The hon.