

Privilege

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: It would help the Chair if I was allowed to listen to the hon. House leader.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the former member of the House, Mr. Stewart, wrote a letter to the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, the Chair, myself, and others, categorically denying the contents of that news story.

• (1520)

Furthermore, the recipient of the letter, who dispersed it apparently throughout his membership in the United States, wrote to the Speaker and the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, myself, and others stating explicitly that he, in fact, had taken the letter from Ron Stewart on plain stationery, had affixed to it the letterhead of the House of Commons with the title of former parliamentary secretary, had affixed to it the block, and had himself sent out bogus propaganda material. This is an American citizen who did this.

He said to the hon. member that he had done that. He said that in no way, shape or form did he ask Mr. Stewart's permission to do that. For the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, in view of that information—

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the best way to proceed would be to let the hon. House leader finish. I will come back to the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

I must remind all hon. members that in these matters it is a *prima facie* case that the Speaker must decide. It is not necessary for the Speaker to sort out all the facts.

Will the hon. House leader continue, please.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, there has been the categorical denial by the former member of the House. There has been the categorical admission by the American who received this letter that he was the one who had improperly affixed the Coat of Arms of the House of Commons, and so on, to a letter received by him on plain white stationery. And, it seems pretty obviously, there is the original concern about which the hon. member had expressed his indignation is his raising of November 1988 members' manual—interestingly enough a manual that was released to Members of Parliament after Mr. Stewart was no longer here. He was supposed to somehow

anticipate what was in the future manual to be given to members, had he run for election. That notwithstanding, it is a side issue.

It is pretty clear that it is not acceptable for Americans, Australians, Indonesians or anybody else to take the stationery of the Canadian House of Commons and, on the basis of that, to fraudulently put onto a letter of any sort this Coat of Arms, to claim that it was sent out under some official status, and to use that for their purposes. That is obvious.

While the privileges of the House are very important, I do not know how we can extend those beyond the borders of Canada. If there is a way, I would certainly have no objection to getting that American up to the Bar of the House of Commons and having him explain how he has abused the privileges of the House, because he most certainly has. But it is an American who has done something in the United States. This is not a Canadian.

I think it is less than honourable and I am disappointed that the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell should seek to malign the former member by raising a point of privilege about his activities, which is not justified in this case. This American has abused the House, to be sure. There is no problem in that regard. By what means would he propose that we could somehow bring our privileges to bear on people who live outside the boundaries of this country?

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, after interrupting me six times, is still not hearing what I have to say because he keeps talking. He cannot hear without his mouth in action, apparently.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: The unfortunate situation, I thought, was closed, and should have been closed. In an earlier day of more honourable behaviour, it would have been closed a long time ago.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, as you know I, too, filed a notice with you on April 18 after reading the report in the newspaper.

I listened with interest when the government House leader said that, yes, indeed, he agrees that the privileges of the House have been breached. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker—and I take him for his word—I think this is a serious matter. How we deal with it most appropriately would be open to some question. The fact that the government House leader has indicated that he, too,