

tion, and he concluded his answer to my request for documents by saying:

In terms of information, I spoke to a colleague of the hon. member and I am willing to make the information available.

What information? The information for which I asked was documents; but the information which I got was a four-page statement by the minister, once more interpreting events.

I understand, as everyone now must understand, that the minister never intended to supply the documents which I had requested. When the minister said "in terms of information," he meant to qualify what otherwise would be an unequivocal promise to supply the documents which were the subject of my question.

So with that background, I wish now to move, seconded by the hon. member for Châteauguay (Mr. Watson):

That the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development be summoned before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections to explain his failure to provide specific information which had been requested after having indicated he would do so.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the alleged question of privilege which the hon. member has raised, I intend to describe to the House some of the aspects of this incident.

First of all, the hon. member persists in using a term regarding the incident which is simply not correct, and I mentioned in my answer to him yesterday that that term is not correct. Today again he used the word "drilling". The Dome-Canmar operation at the Nerlerk M-98 site was not in a drilling situation; they were not drilling into the hydrocarbon zone. What they were doing is production testing, which is quite different from the allegations that the hon. member insists on making. I suggest to the hon. member that he get his facts straight. They were not drilling. He knows it but he persists in using the term.

Further, it should be pointed out that I had made information available to the hon. member, to the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), the former minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the hon. member for Nunatsiak (Mr. Ittinuar).

The hon. member is asking now for specific documents relating to information pertaining to the decision. I made the information available, as I said I would. I said I would make information available regarding the incident which has been the subject of debate or questioning in the House previously.

In the spring of 1979, the former government approved the Dome-Canmar drilling program for the 1979 season. That approval provided that all deep well drilling terminate by midnight, September 25, 1979, with provision, on authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development or his designated official, to extend drilling and other operations in a well a further 20 days, that is until October 15; and that production testing in a cased well, where conditions at a drill site of weather, sea and ice state permit, be allowed until formation of grey-white ice at Nerlerk M-98.

Privilege—Mr. Penner

Deep well drilling and other operations at the Nerlerk well, among others, was extended for a ten-day period upon the September 25 termination date by myself based on the current and forecast weather, ice and sea state which was favourable at that time. That extension was effective until last October 5.

The chief conservation officer met in Ottawa on October 3, 1979 with his geological, geophysical and engineering experts, and then with senior officials of interested departments, namely the Department of the Environment, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Department of Transport, on October 4, to review Dome-Canmar's request to continue operation after October 5, 1979 at Nerlerk M-98, among other wells.

The consensus reached as a result of those consultations was that the "designated official" of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development should assent to Dome-Canmar's request to—

—conduct in the case hole, testing, suspending or abandoning operations after October 5, 1979, and to continue, if required, any conditions made practicable, after October 15, 1979.

This consensus was reached in consideration of the following—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think the House can readily see that, on the basis of a question of privilege, we are now getting into a rather extensive discussion of the substance of the matter. If a question of privilege exists in the proposal of the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Penner), it must surely exist upon one premise only, and that is whether the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Epp), in his answer to the hon. member for Cochrane yesterday, said that he would produce some documents. The minister is now indicating what the history of the matter is, what the information is. This, I am sure, is interesting to the House but we have gone beyond anything close to a question of privilege.

The only question to which I have to direct my attention is the basis for the question of privilege of the hon. member for Cochrane, which is that the minister yesterday said he would produce documents and then did not. That is the area upon which I wish to hear the minister. The minister said yesterday:

I spoke to a colleague of the hon. member and I am willing to make the information available.

I have to know whether, by that statement, the minister said he was going to table documents or to make information available, whether he stands by that undertaking. If he has fulfilled it, then the question of privilege, it seems to me, would be terminated.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I spoke to the hon. member's colleague before the question period yesterday. I am referring to the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. The information which I had in hand was the information from which I was reading and the information which I made available to the hon. member for Cochrane, to the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and to the hon. member for Nunatsiak. Further, what I undertake to do, if there are documents relative to what the hon. member for Cochrane is referring, is to check