

was signed in the form of at least a tentative agreement between the employer and the employees, it would be helpful if the President of the Treasury Board would undertake to table the agreement in the House so that we can actually see the wording with respect to whatever disciplinary action or no disciplinary action there is to be taken with respect to those who have acted illegally.

I do not wish to delay the House. I would only point out that the President of the Treasury Board has made repeated statements in this House indicating that he intends to uphold the law, and I emphasize the civil law. If agreements are broken he will see to it that people are held responsible. Yet, we now have two conflicting statements as to what in fact will be the form of discipline, if any, which will be brought against some people who broke the law.

Also we are faced with the fact that the President of the Treasury Board has now apparently delegated to another group—a labour-management group, eventually an arbitrator—the entire question of discipline other than anything of a criminal nature. This is a very, very serious problem if in fact it has been agreed to. Now we are in the position of where the second great mistake has been made by the President of the Treasury Board. He acquiesced in a too “small” liberal, settlement for the postal workers. Now he has virtually undermined the entire system of collective bargaining which we have in this country by, in the one breath, in effect talking sternly about discipline and, on the other hand, simply delegating any future responsibility for discipline to a committee of labour and management.

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, there are two things. First, opposition members are talking about answers that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) gave them, when obviously they would have preferred different ones, or else they do not understand those given. In any event, the fact that they are dissatisfied with the answers given or, as they admit, that they do not understand them as they would want to, does not constitute a question of privilege.

The second point, Madam Speaker, is that a minister does not have to make a statement in the House. As we all know, under Standing Order 15(3), a minister may make a statement if he wishes, but he is not required to do so. The President of the Treasury Board has indeed shown respect for this institution in two ways. First of all, he postponed his press conference until after question period. He could have held it this morning or before question period. However, out of respect for this institution, he waited until questions had been put to him in the House before talking to the media. Second, he made himself available during the entire question period to answer questions from the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) or any other Conservative or NDP member. He was available and provided complete and honest answers. And if hon. members of the opposition are not satisfied with the gist

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or substance of these answers, this is not grounds for rising on a question of privilege, Madam Speaker, just something to be debated.

For these two reasons, therefore, I respectfully submit that there are no grounds for this question of privilege, because the President of the Treasury Board has answered very well, he has respected this institution by answering all the questions directed to him, he has delayed his press conference until the oral question period is over, and he is not bound to make a statement pursuant to Standing Order 15(3).

[English]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): On the same question of privilege—

[Translation]

Madam Speaker: Indeed, I can hardly conclude that there are grounds for a question of privilege. Obviously, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) is not happy with the way the minister has fulfilled or interpreted his obligations toward him.

The minister has provided answers which the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton feels are inadequate, but insisted that he had not undertaken to make a statement, only to keep the House advised of any new development.

The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton is still not satisfied with these answers. But I must regretfully rule that this is only a debate, that at best it is just a grievance against the minister who, according to the hon. member, had made certain commitment which he has failed to meet.

Therefore, this is not a matter for a question of privilege, and I cannot entertain the point raised by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton.

[English]

MR. ROBINSON (BURNABY)—STATEMENTS MADE BY PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY DURING ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, my question of privilege relates to a question I raised earlier in the House with the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan). It arises initially from a proceeding in what we refer to as the “late show” on May 8, 1980, in which I raised certain questions following up on a question to the Solicitor General.

In reply the then parliamentary secretary to the Minister of State for Mines, apparently speaking on behalf of the Solicitor General, made certain statements. Subsequently it came to my attention that those statements were such that the parliamentary secretary apparently inadvertently misled the House. During the course of my question in question period today, I gave the opportunity to the Solicitor General to clarify the position and to correct the erroneous statements made by the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of State for Mines.

I believe the Solicitor General stated that in fact he had not received this letter previously. I was informed by the former