

● (1510)

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, on the same question of privilege, I believe that the hon. member's point is unfounded. I can understand why he would wish to stand up and present his point so vociferously, because it is in the interest of his constituents. I am sure that that is an obligation to the hon. member and that he finds it an attractive position to take.

Nevertheless, to the best of my belief, the answers which I have given to the hon. member in the House are accurate answers to the questions which he raised. Whenever I have met with the various people concerned, I have indicated that I did wish to take a decision very quickly and that I hoped to do so within ten days or two weeks. Always I emphasized that I could not give an absolute guarantee on the time. I was also careful to point out that I would take my decision quickly, but that that decision might very well necessitate consultation with my colleagues.

It is true that I took my decision rather quickly, and that the matter is one on which I am in consultation with my colleagues at the present time. There are various options which I have put forward for consideration and discussion, and the rumours and newspaper headlines to which the hon. member has referred are unfounded. The decision has not yet been finally taken.

The hon. member may prefer to believe the rumours which he reads in the newspapers, and I cannot prevent him from doing so, but I will tell him honestly that the final decision to which he has referred has not yet been taken. As I have told the hon. member, consultation is in process and I believe that the decision will be taken in a very few days.

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Madam Speaker, I have listened with considerable interest to the comments of the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) and to the thoroughly inadequate reply of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts). As the minister well knows, the former Liberal government had made extensive studies of the appropriateness of the move of Parks Canada from Cornwall to Peterborough and, in fact, was only waiting for the conclusion of the 1979 election to announce their decision.

When the government of which I was a member took power, I was minister of the environment and I accepted, after careful consideration, the information which was available to the former Liberal government. On the basis of that information given to me by my officials, I made a decision last summer that the move should proceed. That decision was clear, unequivocal and was made because we could not—nor was it right—allow the public servants in the department and the people of both Cornwall and Peterborough to go on not knowing the intentions of the government.

To listen to the minister, one would think that no decision had ever been made. He is now dithering around for 14 days, then ten days and then another 14 days and then going to his colleagues before making up his mind about something on which there was a clear decision made by a government of

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Canada, and it was made last summer. The conduct of the minister is absolutely disgraceful, because what the minister is doing is going back on a decision which was made many months ago on the basis of the information, the accounting and the propriety of such a move, all of which was instituted by the former Liberal government prior to the election of 1979.

The hon. member for Peterborough has brought this matter to you, Madam Speaker, as a question of privilege, which it is most clearly. If members in this House cannot receive a better answer from a minister than the ones which we have just had to listen to, then there is no use having question period. This minister is still misleading the House because it is quite clear that the hon. member from Cornwall has gone public and stated that in his view—and it is well known—Parks Canada should not move, and his view is the same now as that of the minister's.

Without actually giving their decision in the House and coming clean with the media, this government, in effect, has in a circuitous way not only made a decision but communicated that decision. They have completely circumvented the right of the hon. member for Peterborough to raise that matter in this House on behalf of his constituents and receive an honest answer from a government which, in this case, is not only acting dishonestly, but shabbily.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser) has not brought up a new matter, therefore I will not allow the hon. minister to reply.

I have listened to the arguments presented very carefully, and I do not really see a question of privilege in the question raised by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) nor in the argument raised by the hon. member for Vancouver South. It is very much a matter of one member not being satisfied with the answer which he received during the question period. Beauchesne very clearly states that such a situation does not constitute a question of privilege.

Therefore, I would assume that both members are satisfied with the arguments brought forward by the minister. If not, there is ample occasion to ask other questions and to go into debate at some other time.

MR. ANGUISH—EJECTION OF GUESTS FROM MEMBERS' GALLERY

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. A little more than an hour ago some guests of mine who had been given signed passes by myself were ejected from the members' gallery.

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, a question of privilege.

Madam Speaker: I am already listening to one question of privilege, and I cannot entertain a second one at the moment. I