

(Mr. de Corneille), but it does not. I will return to that matter on another day.

My question of privilege relates to the answers given in the House today by the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) to certain questions I had asked him. I maintain that the Prime Minister misled the House of Commons and the Canadian people in the answers he gave to my questions. If I recall it correctly, he said that he and his Quebec ministers would campaign for the "No" option in the Quebec referendum and would participate in the pro-federalist committee, and he said that this had always been their position.

I should like to read into the record what was said last week from his seat in the House by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. La Salle). I had put the following question to the Prime Minister:

Does this mean that the Conservative party has no position on sovereignty association, and do I understand the Prime Minister to say that the militants of his party are free to support whatever side they want on this question?

Next came an interjection from the Minister of Supply and Services when he said from his seat:

Ask me the question and I will answer yes or no.

In a press conference in Montreal last week the Minister of Supply and Services, in announcing a policy conference of the Conservative party in Quebec, said—and these are the quotes: The Progressive Conservative Party should stay outside the (pro-federalist) umbrella committee because we have different objectives—

He also said:

Our position is not the same as Mr. Ryan's—

He was referring to the provincial leader. But even the Prime Minister, in answer to my question last week—as reported at page 804 of *Hansard* of that day said:—

It is my expectation that the question will be phrased in such a way that members of the Progressive Conservative Party will want to vote against that question. That is my expectation of what will happen—but I have not seen the question proposed by Mr. Lévesque; perhaps the hon. member has.

I am not opposed to the Prime Minister's party doing another flip-flop on this question, as they have done on many others, but I am opposed to the Prime Minister trying to mislead the House and the country when he said today that they are for the "No" option and that they have always been for the "No" option, since the Minister of Supply and Services said in the House that he could have voted yes or no, since he was supported by the minister in charge of CIDA who sits in the other place, and since the Prime Minister himself said that he did not know what he was going to do until he saw the final question put in the referendum.

If the question period is to have any significance, then we must be able to expect from the Prime Minister and his ministers the truth in answering questions from members of the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Withdraw.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Privilege—Mr. Allmand

Mr. Allmand: Read the record.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), in concluding his intervention, made the suggestion that the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) did not tell the truth, that should be clarified.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I was only able to take notes today and I do not have the "blues" as yet, but the Prime Minister today tried to give the impression in the House that he and his ministers had been supporting the "No" position in the referendum today, yesterday and last week. I pointed out that it is on the record in *Hansard* that the Minister of Supply and Services, as reported at page 804 of *Hansard* of October 31 last week, said:

Ask me the question and I will answer yes or no.

And in a press conference in Montreal he said the same thing. I am saying that today the Prime Minister, deliberately or not, was misleading the House in saying that that had been the position of the Progressive Conservative Party last week. We should not have to accept that loose, sloppy answers in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Before we go further, I want to keep this matter on a plane of proper procedure. The hon. member knows that he is raising what might appear to be a disagreement. That has happened many times and often members have raised the point, in response to an answer given by a minister, that if there has been the appearance of a contradictory response on two occasions, that the minister be given an opportunity, through the raising of a question of privilege, to comment on it and thus give the Chair an opportunity to determine whether it is a simple disagreement or whether there is a procedural matter.

Also, it is not necessarily a matter of the substance of what the hon. member is raising—because in substance he is raising something of a nature similar to that which had been raised many times before, as I have indicated—but it is solely a matter of form. As I think the House knows, it is one thing entirely as to what we are talking about when we get into matters of this sort. These are not restrictions on what the hon. member wishes to say but simply restrictions on the manner in which an hon. member says something in the House. The hon. member is entitled to say what he said today. He is not entitled to suggest that the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) did not tell the truth. I noticed he departed from that which was getting very dangerously close to being unparliamentary in his language; that has not been done. Now it rests with me to determine whether this is simply a matter of disagreement or whether in fact there is a matter of privilege.

● (1510)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I think the old pugilist across the floor would probably serve himself and the House well if he would read the