

**Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I am unaware of free mailing privileges which are available to the armed forces. Armed forces personnel are treated in the same way as any other citizen of Canada abroad. I would be happy to look into this matter to see the import of the hon. member's question, but I do not think this is a step which would be recommended at this time.

The armed forces are paid well. They are paid at the same level as the public service of Canada. We want to make certain that they continue to be paid well and that they keep up with the cost of living, but I have no intention of extending free mailing privileges to the armed forces, or even requesting it.

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### HOUSE OF COMMONS

#### ABSENCE OF MINISTERS—PROPOSED MOTION TO ADJOURN

**Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a different point. In view of the fact that every economic minister is absent from this House, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Does the hon. member have a supplementary question?

**Mr. Elzinga:** I move that this House do now adjourn.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** There is a motion on the floor.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member will know that I recognized him during the course of the question period. A motion to adjourn is always in order, according to the Standing Orders of the House. However, such a motion must be put forward, as I have ruled on more than one occasion in the past, at a time when a member has the floor for the purpose of putting a motion, which is not done during the question period. When a member has the floor at a time at which motions are received, then that motion is always receivable.

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### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. LALONDE—ARTICLE APPEARING IN "READER'S DIGEST"

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Yesterday in this House I was asked questions by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) concerning an article which attributed a certain statement to me. I read that article overnight. I would like to say that to my knowledge I have never been interviewed by the journalist for *Reader's Digest* who wrote this article.

#### *Privilege—Mr. Lalonde*

I checked my public statements over the last six months, and the only possible source of anything approaching such a statement as the one read in this House by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands would have been on the occasion of a well attended press conference in Montreal on October 6 last. That press conference was well reported at the time. I indicated repeatedly during that press conference that there could be no question of negotiating sovereignty-association in any way, shape or form, and one piece of evidence of this is the *Ottawa Citizen* of October 7. This was only one among several other quotations in the newspapers at the time. The *Ottawa Citizen* said, and I quote:

Lalonde reaffirmed that an administration under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau would not enter into negotiations on sovereignty-association if the province chose that option in a referendum expected late next year or early in 1980.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lalonde:** The article continues:

"—We will not negotiate sovereignty-association," Lalonde said. "We do not believe it's a workable solution."

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lalonde:** I read the transcript of the whole press conference and found no trace of the statement attributed to me. I can only conclude that the statement was not made. In fact, the section of the article in *Reader's Digest* where one finds the statement attributed to me talks about the flexibility of federalism, not about possible negotiations about sovereignty-association. Everybody present at the conference understood that what was referred to were the specific policy proposals of the PQ in various fields of government activity. I indicated that out of these 85 per cent could be implemented under the BNA Act as it stands at the present time.

As to the other 15 per cent, amendments like those we have been discussing with all the provinces over the last few months would be required; for example, amendments dealing with resources, marriage and divorce, communications, indirect taxation, etc., or there could be implementation by the federal government after consultation with the provinces.

In order to make the record perfectly clear and beyond any doubt on this subject I would like to read into the record an excerpt of what I actually said at that conference. The first statement was in French:

[*Translation*]

Finally, to deal with the federal system, is it true that it has been so bad for Quebec in 1867?

[*English*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I do not want to restrict the minister's right to do what he is doing. We have traditionally permitted members of the House of Commons to rise in their place to complain that they had been inaccurately reported to the point of privilege or perhaps contempt of the House. In this particular case, however, I think the hon. minister is going another step. He is indicating, first, that he did not give the interview which was allegedly reported by *Reader's Digest*,