

Privilege—Mr. Allmand

the biggest issue facing Canadians. In the Dewdney-Alouette regional district, which is the eastern half of my riding, 47 per cent of the people are unemployed. In committee the Deputy Minister stated, and the Minister has stated this, that fast-tracking programs for troubled areas would be instituted. Will the Minister consider instituting one of these programs for that area due to the problems in the lumber industry at this time?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will look into the way in which the LEAD Program might apply to that area. I will be happy to take the representations of the Hon. Member seriously and do just that.

REFORESTATION PROGRAM

Mr. Gerry St. Germain (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister consult with the Minister of the Environment with regard to a possible reforestation program to employ some of the unemployed in the lumber industry? I am sure that these people will be able to find good, long-term employment in the reforestation industry. Would the Minister look at this aspect of it as well?

● (1500)

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have just consulted with the Minister of the Environment who assures me that he would be happy to discuss the matter with me further.

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PETITION

MR. BERGER—ESCALATION OF ARMS RACE

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Laurier (Mr. Berger) on Wednesday, April 18, 1984, meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. ALLMAND—COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR HOUSE EMPLOYEES—APPEAL BY INTERNAL ECONOMY COMMISSION TO FEDERAL COURT

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) has served notice to the Chair of a matter of privilege which he wishes to raise. Before giving the floor to the Hon. Member, the Chair would like to make the observation that the matter affecting the unionization of House of Commons employees is *sub judice*. However, the Hon. Member is raising the matter as a question of privilege and I invite him to restrict his remarks to the question of how his privileges are affected.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the notice which I gave you earlier today, I wish to raise a question of privilege which affects my rights as a Member of the House and which I believe affects the rights of all other Members of the House. The employees of this House, whether they are messengers, security officers, interpreters, cleaners and all others, work for all of the Members of the House and not only for the Cabinet or for the Board of Internal Economy.

When the Canada Labour Relations Board decided on April 9 that employees of the House of Commons had the right to collective bargaining under the Canada Labour Code, it was a decision that affected all Members of the House of Commons and one that was welcomed by many. It was therefore with some surprise and dismay, I might say, that I learned on April 19 after the House had adjourned for Easter that the Board of Internal Economy had decided to appeal the April 9 decision of the Labour Relations Board to the Federal Court.

I take strong exception to the fact that a small group of Members of this House, being the Board of Internal Economy—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Hon. Member was invited to address his remarks to how his privileges are affected.

Mr. Allmand: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was about to do that and I had already begun to do that. I was saying that a small group of Members of the House have decided to appeal that decision to the Federal Court without consulting all of the other Members of the House and without referring the matter to them for decision. This is a matter which touches upon the work of every Member in a personal and intimate way. It is not a matter which should have been dealt with by the board without wide consultation. It is a matter for the whole House and not just for the Government to decide. Since these people work for me, I feel very strongly that I should at least have been consulted in some way or another.

I submit very strongly, Mr. Speaker, that I have a *prima facie* case of privilege. I would ask that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on privileges and Elections where it can be examined and decided upon. I understand that this matter was discussed at a much earlier date by a committee—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Chair has allowed the Hon. Member to make his argument. The matter is *sub judice*. In the opinion of the Chair, the Chair cannot make a *prima facie* ruling of privilege which would have the effect of giving priority to this motion at this time. Therefore, the Chair will have to so rule.

Mr. Allmand: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. If these matters cannot be raised in the House of Commons—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member cannot reflect upon a decision of the Chair. That is what he is seeking to do as a point of order. The Chair has given consideration to the matter. The Hon. Member gave notice and the Chair, under the circumstances, has no option but to decide that it cannot