

MR. LANG—COMMENTS OF MR. KORCHINSKI

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, do I understand correctly that you will not allow me to comment on that long, elaborate talk—

An hon. Member: That's right.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Unless I am prepared to hear the hon. member further, I do not propose to hear the minister either. It seems to me that the hon. member has given a description of the events. I am not able to find in them anything on a prima facie basis which raises any allegation against the minister; quite to the contrary. If there was something in the nature of an allegation with regard to what the minister said or with regard to what was described in the House, I would be prepared to hear both sides; however, I think the matter ought to cease unless I am prepared to hear several arguments on both sides.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I think it is a legitimate question—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lang: It is—

An hon. Member: Order. Stanley had to listen to the Chair; so should you.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is based on the imputations and the comments of the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) to the effect that there was something improper in the use of this particular aircraft.

Mr. Clark: User pay.

Mr. Lang: As the hon. member comes from the west I should have thought he would understand that it is important for ministers to get into the west of this country, and into the Atlantic. He may not understand this—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Clark: Abuser pay.

Mr. Speaker: With respect to the minister, I listened very carefully, and I heard nothing in the remarks of the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) which in any way imputed improper actions. Rather, it seems to me that the remarks of the hon. member imputed quite a proper use of the aircraft by the minister. I refer to the attendance at the opening of an airport, which is the minister's responsibility, and the hon. member accompanying him in that function. Accordingly, if the question only relates to imputations of impropriety, I see none. Unless there is another point that the minister wishes to speak on I would be prepared to close the matter forthwith.

Privilege—Mr. Lang

● (1510)

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, there were suggestions that I could not have had government business which would cause the delay. I think I am entitled to make the point that my government business is very extensive throughout the week ends, in Ottawa and in other places. In short, I used that aircraft only for government purposes and it is very important that I do so. I would ask hon. members to take my word as a member on that. The pure and simple fact is that I have no personal business; only government business, except for my family in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) on a point of order.

Mr. Broadbent: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) on a question of privilege.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak on the same question of privilege to which the hon. minister has just addressed himself.

An hon. Member: He has just flown off.

Mr. Broadbent: If Your Honour has recognized that the minister has the right to enter a comment on that question of privilege, then I think members on this side are entitled to reply.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) was given the floor on a question of privilege and I had to hear him. His remarks referred to a statement alleged to have been made to the press by the minister. I have said before that the hon. member for Mackenzie seemed to me to describe a series of events which did not raise any impropriety in the use of the aircraft by the minister. The minister saw fit to make one comment, and that had to do with the day following the event referred to by the hon. member. I cannot find a question of privilege in either contribution.

The last thing I would want to do would be to extend the discussion under the guise of a question of privilege to other than the two principal combatants. It has been the custom of the House to try to recognize some basic principle in such matters. To allow the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby to speak now would be a loose application of the rules as far as privilege is concerned and it would be inviting a full range of debate on a matter which I am sure is going to be raised in many other ways in the course of this parliament, but hopefully not by way of a question of privilege.

The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) on a point of order.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I should like to raise a point of order. It is an urgent matter and I hope Your Honour will give me the floor for a few moments to develop it.