

Privilege

extend the funding for the program. We are currently negotiating an extra \$1 million over the next three years.

I would also like to tell my hon. colleague that the clean-up of the Fraser River is considered a priority in the Green Plan. At the moment, my department, in consultation with other departments having the responsibility for the Fraser, are developing actions which focus on the areas of pollution abatement, waste management, and site clean-up. That will be made public as soon as possible.

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PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: I have, first, a question of privilege from the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

There are also some other questions of privilege likely to be brought before the Chair. If the Chair is correct, these are questions that are very important to many lot of members. They are also questions that I have to ask hon. members to deal with in an exact, clear, and helpful way to me.

I am going to hear them, but I am asking hon. members, if I can say so, putting out a bit of a caveat, that I expect to be addressed on these matters in a way that can help me make a decision, not in a way that is designed to create abrasive feelings in this Chamber. We have a duty in this place to take care of our country and sometimes that requires some very special discipline.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park I know will help the Chair.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I gave you notice of this question of privilege with the greatest seriousness because, when I was first elected in 1979 by the constituents of Parkdale—High Park, then re-elected in 1980, and again in 1988, each time before I could set foot into this Chamber I had to take an oath of allegiance. These are the rules.

I wanted to take that oath of allegiance because when I took the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, the Queen, I knew that I took this oath to serve Canada, and to fight in this Chamber for everything that is in the best interest

of our beautiful country. I know every member sitting here came to this Chamber with the same intent.

But when someone else sitting in this Chamber now takes the same oath and then goes and washes his or her hands of this oath, this oath has very little meaning to every member sitting in the House. When that happened, my constituents phoned me. They were very, very angry. They said: "Mr. Flis, that oath you took does not mean anything. What is happening up there? How dare you sit in the same chamber with someone who is denying the oath that he took." Maybe this member did it without thinking of the consequences of his actions. Therefore, I would like to make a constructive suggestion.

If that member, either today or sometime this week or next, would think about what he did, stand up in this Chamber, and apologize for his actions, it would in a way restore the oath of allegiance that he took. This would satisfy me. I know it would satisfy my constituents in Parkdale—High Park.

Failing that, then I have no other choice but to request you, Mr. Speaker, to make a ruling whether this member should be sitting in the same Chamber with us. Failing that, I request that this matter be referred to the appropriate committee to look into this whole matter because it undermines the role of every member in the House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford seeks the floor.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the allegations the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park just made are probably the most serious ones ever made in this House. I must say that, during the past few months, I made some research and had research made on the Oath of Allegiance.

Mr. Speaker, you asked us to help you. I think it is important that we talk today about the right to hold a seat in this House, a House governed by the Canadian Constitution and which recognizes full freedom of expression for every member.

In the early days of Parliament, the principle of "no taxation without representation" was laid. That was way before my days, Mr. Speaker. There are millions of Quebecers who are in favour of sovereignty and still pay taxes administered by this Parliament. These people too,