

the house, Mr. Speaker, and he does not have to ask permission to be in the house. And I doubt whether that is what he has just said on the phone.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. Members: A question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Are hon. members rising on a question of privilege? I believe this would be the occasion upon which to remind hon. members that in my view the procedure with regard to questions of privilege is being seriously abused in this house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I am not about to suggest that questions of privilege should not be raised, but hon. members know that according to long standing practice and the rules of the house it is only in extreme circumstances that questions of privilege should be raised. Hon. members may argue that the circumstances at this time justify a question of privilege being raised. What I am saying now does not necessarily apply to hon. members who may wish to raise a question at this moment. But I thought this was a good occasion upon which to express in a general way a reminder that hon. members should be mindful of precedents in this regard.

This having been said, I will call upon the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate to proceed with his question of privilege.

Mr. Lundrigan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I say I agree entirely with your ruling, though I think the need for it stems from the kind of rules and procedures which are being forced on us by this government. The Prime Minister has accused me of lying.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Lundrigan: He said he seriously doubted whether my report to the house was correct. I will only say I would not doubt the word of the Prime Minister if he made an observation in the house; I would go along with it, although I might be inclined to do otherwise. I was in conversation with the Minister of Fisheries. The minister indicated to me that he intended to contact the Prime Minister but wondered whether, in view of the roster system, he should come into the house this afternoon. I am confident from the remarks of the Minister of Fisheries on other

Inquiries of the Ministry

occasions that he would like to be in the house on days when he is not listed.

Some hon. Members: Hear hear.

Mr. McGrath: The Prime Minister has doubted the word of another member of this house, and under the rules he must withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is not correct in his interpretation of the rules. It is against the rules to say that another member has wilfully misled the house or been untruthful. On the other hand, I will admit to the hon. member who has raised this point of order that all hon. members have to accept the word of other members. This is a basic rule. This cannot even be the subject of discussion. It is a basic principle that every member of the house has to accept the word of another member, and it should not even be the subject of discussion.

Mr. Carter: The Prime Minister wanted to speak on the point of order.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member for St. John's West would allow me, I have made a ruling and I suggest we go on to another subject.

[Translation]

INDUSTRY

QUEBEC—REQUEST THAT EASTERN TOWNSHIPS BECOME DESIGNATED AREA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Henri Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the hon. minister of Forestry and Rural Development.

Would the hon. minister tell the house whether or not he proposes to look into the economic situation of the eastern townships, especially the Sherbrooke area which is in dire straits. Does the minister expect that the area will be included in future among the designated areas?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Forestry and Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly our intention to study the economy of every region in Canada, including Sherbrooke. However, no decision will be taken as to making Sherbrooke a designated area until the new legislation is passed