

*Privilege—Mr. Domm*

**Mr. MacEachen:** Madam Speaker, I am aware of the history of that particular proposal because, as the hon. member may recall, I was chairman of the platform committee for this party prior to the last election. I am aware of the nature of the discussions that took place during the campaign and I will have this before me, obviously, if and when I make any further tax changes.

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE****MR. DOMM—PARKS CANADA—PROPOSED RELOCATION OF REGIONAL OFFICE FROM CORNWALL TO PETERBOROUGH**

**Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege which I feel involves a gross abuse in this House and an insult to every member here. Earlier in the week I asked a question of the Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts) dealing with the relocation of the Parks Canada regional office from Cornwall to Peterborough. At that time I asked the minister two questions: Was the move proceeding as planned; and why did he require more than the 14 days he had assured various people it would take for him to make an announcement?

The minister responded, as reported in *Hansard* for April 28 at page 453, that he had not given the assurance of 14 days. He also responded by saying that he had made a decision in his own mind and was reviewing it with his colleagues.

My question of privilege is this. Rather than honouring the responsibilities of a minister of the Crown in answering members of Parliament who ask questions on behalf of their constituents, the minister responsible for the move of Parks Canada's regional office from Cornwall to Peterborough chose to discuss it with his colleagues, who in turn gave information to the media the day after, rather than to this House. The hon. member for Stormont-Dundas (Mr. Lumley) advised the media the day after that he and the minister thought the same. We all know how the hon. member for Stormont-Dundas feels.

My question of privilege is this, Madam Speaker. If ministers of the Government of Canada opposite refuse to answer questions in this House, asked responsibly, by hon. members in the interests of their constituents, trying to find out what are the problems that create all this indecision, then I maintain that Parliament will lose its credibility with the people of Canada and ministers opposite deserve to be reprimanded.

I appeal to you, Madam Speaker, to intercede in this matter. My reasons in support of my position can be found in statements by the minister, first of all in March to the acting mayor of the city of Peterborough, the warden of the 18 municipalities of Peterborough county, that he would make that decision prior to the opening of Parliament, and that he would then announce his intention.

Following that, as reported in the Peterborough *Examiner* of April 12:

The minister promised the employees he would make a decision in a week or ten days—

He gave those employees of Parks Canada the assurance of a decision in that time frame.

In addition, as reported in the Cornwall *Standard-Freeholder* of April 16 we find the report that Harley Starks, vice president of the local of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, said that the minister had also promised them that if the issue does go to cabinet he will announce a decision before Parliament sits.

The minister has said there were two deadlines. First he mentioned 14 days before Parliament reconvened. Let me refer to *The Globe and Mail* of April 25, where it is reported:

Employees say that Mr. Roberts, at a meeting on March 12, promised a decision in two weeks or before the opening of Parliament at the latest. Parliament opened on April 14.

My question of privilege is further substantiated in this morning's paper.

I directed the question to the minister on Monday of this week. The minister said he had made up his mind that he would not respond to a member of Parliament. On what authority does a minister of the Crown take it upon himself to circumvent parliamentary procedure? The purpose of the question period is for members of Parliament to learn what are the programs intended by the ministerial people on the other side of the House. The minister has said he has made up his mind that he will not tell the member of Parliament for Peterborough, but he will tell his colleagues; and then his colleague the hon. member for Stormont-Dundas, when interviewed by a reporter of a local paper here, advised that the minister does support that hon. member. We all know what that hon. member's feelings are.

As a result of that interview we find an article in today's paper under the heading "Parks Canada move vetoed—". This reminds me of the Eldorado affair which was also vetoed. It is vetoed regardless of cost and without accountability by government. It is done without any answers to members in the opposition.

I would remind you, Madam Speaker, that it is our job as members of the opposition to represent our constituents. We cannot represent our constituents when we have ministers on the other side of the House who completely disregard the parliamentary process.

I appeal to you, Madam Speaker, to intercede on my behalf, on behalf of every member of the opposition, and on behalf of every backbencher on the government side of the House, to hold these ministers responsible, and to require them to account for their actions in running the Government of Canada. This is what Parliament is all about. As a recent member of this House I am appalled by this situation, and I am sure the Speaker of this House will intercede on my behalf, making these ministers accountable to members of the opposition in the proper fashion. Thank you, Madam Speaker.