

Government Orders

Mr. Kaplan: Yesterday morning, in the light of the apparent unwillingness of the government to call in the RCMP in connection with work being done by Senator Cogger, or possibly being done by Senator Cogger and his firm for the Federal Business Development Bank, I telephoned the Commissioner of the RCMP and told him that if an inspector would attend at my office between four-thirty and five o'clock yesterday afternoon I would present him with a collection of documents.

Before doing this a member of my staff, Marc Laframboise of the research bureau of the Liberal caucus, telephoned the Federal Business Development Bank and arranged for relevant documents from the bank to be transmitted to Ottawa for me to include in the package to present to the RCMP.

These documents were sent from Montreal by the Federal Business Development Bank and they were in effect seized by the vice-president of public relations for the bank in Ottawa, so they were not available to me to present to the RCMP.

I consider this to be an interference with my responsibilities as a member of Parliament to do my job in bringing forward the evidence that was available that had to be considered in relation to Senator Cogger's involvement with the Federal Business Development Bank.

I learned only this morning of the reasons which I have just outlined why these documents were not delivered. If you find a *prima facie* case of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member. Are there other members rising on this matter? The Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): I am the member who phoned back the Federal Business Development Bank to find out what had happened.

I was informed this morning that the documents in question had been seized by a gentleman by the name of Michel Azam, identifying himself as the vice-president of government relations for the Federal Business Development Bank. This information had been sent to my colleague, the member for York Centre, to the attention of all Liberal members actually, by the Access to Infor-

mation Co-ordinator of the Federal Business Development Bank.

One element that is important to add here is the fact that these documents we requested, which were promised to us and which were subsequently intercepted were documents in the public domain. They were photocopies of documents previously given to people in the media, i.e. the *Montreal Gazette*.

If you look at the matter closely, Mr. Speaker, you will find that privilege is defined as the sum of our peculiar rights enjoyed by either House and by members individually and collectively.

Using that definition, Mr. Speaker, you will agree with my colleague for York Centre and I. Information was provided to the media, photocopies of which were promised to members of Parliament to do their job. My colleague organized a meeting with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police pursuant to a suggestion made in the House of Commons by a cabinet minister, as a matter of fact.

Those documents were withheld from members of Parliament by a deliberate action on the part of an individual at the Federal Business Development Bank who, by the way, has since agreed to release the documents. Nevertheless, they were not available yesterday for the meeting in question.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that you will be inclined to agree that this House cannot function unless officials of the government give us at least the same courtesy offered to people in the media and others.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to take the matter under advisement. I thank the House for giving consent and the hon. member for York Centre for raising it. I may want to hear further on it. I shall take it under advisement.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADIAN SPACE AGENCY

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of of Bill C-16, an act to establish the Canadian Space Agency and to provide for other matters in relation to space, as