

That now being official with a document on the table—it was tabled and put in *Hansard*—is it not going to make it difficult for you, Madam Speaker, to deny the hon. member for Winnipeg-St. James the right to ask the Minister of Employment and Immigration about that post office in Winnipeg, station D? How can you stop me from asking the Minister of Employment and Immigration about problems in Winnipeg North Centre or problems in Winnipeg generally in which he is interested, since it is there on the table that the Prime Minister has assigned him that responsibility?

I put my question rhetorically, Madam Speaker. I do not expect an answer from the Chair today but I make the point that the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) is one that should be allowed.

It is now clear to me that this question ought to be sent to a committee so we can have it straightened out. We can have the Prime Minister come before that committee and give us again the lecture he gave us today. We can go over the whole civic course, the course on how cabinet is run, what cabinet ministers do when they have administrative responsibilities and when it is just for the glory of the Liberal Party or for the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) to be able to send out cheques.

I submit that whether or not the committee finds there has been an error or impropriety, surely this Parliament has the right to know what the picture now is. It is for that reason I support the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood.

If I may speak for you, Your Honour, I think it would be good for your sake to have this matter sent off to committee so we may find out what the rule is from here on. Are we bound by the old rules that we can ask the Minister of Finance only about financial matters or can members from Nova Scotia ask him questions about anywhere in Nova Scotia? Must I stick to employment and immigration matters when I address the Minister of Employment and Immigration or can I ask him questions about Manitoba because he has been assigned those responsibilities?

As I say, at least let us get the matter cleared up. Maybe the result of such a discussion by the committee will put an end to all this and we will be back to what the rules say.

Mr. Peterson: You would never abuse the rules on this!

Mr. Andre: He is not abusing them. We have the right to ask a minister about his responsibility.

Mr. Knowles: I submit the hon. member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson) is breaking the rule by getting on the record without being in his own seat. The rules are being severely strained by this new practice about which we have had no knowledge in the past. I think the least that should be done, Madam Speaker, is that you should give the House the opportunity to say yes or no to the motion of my hon. friend. I make the point again that you do not decide that there is positively a question of privilege, you do not decide that the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood is right or that the

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Minister of Finance or the Solicitor General happens to be right, what you decide is that there is enough of a case for the House to make the decision.

You may well decide that there is a prima facie case for something to be looked into; a motion is put and the government may use its majority to vote it down. I think common sense would say that the matter ought to be sent to committee. I hope you will look at the whole issue in that light.

In other words, Madam Speaker, I am pleading with you not to look at it in the light of a contest between the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood and the minister who represents his riding; I am asking you to look at it in terms of a confused picture which ought to be cleared up. The best way for the House to clear it up is to have the chance to vote on referring the matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I did not think my life had been further complicated by the remarks of the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) because I thought I would abide by our rules whereby a minister may answer questions only on matters pertaining to his or her portfolio.

An hon. Member: Responsibilities.

Madam Speaker: I thought that what the Right Hon. Prime Minister had said to us was that these supplementary responsibilities were for the purpose of allowing members to have a further recourse in their work in support of their constituencies. However, if the Right Hon. Prime Minister had said something else, I will look into the argument. I am obviously going to take this question under advisement. If he has said something else, I will agree with the hon. member that my life has been complicated by what he has just done, but I hope it has not.

● (1640)

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, I wish to speak to this question of privilege on a matter that affects my riding of Vancouver Centre, and it relates to remarks made on February 19 by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) I will not quote in full what the Minister of Finance said, but as reported in *Hansard* at page 7455, he said this:

—I want to assure the hon. member that the Government of Canada does not believe that any minister has been given responsibility for representing, in this House of Commons, any riding other than the riding for which he has been elected.

The Prime Minister has advised us that this technique of matching ridings is a government technique, that it is a cabinet management tool. I have a document which lists these twinned ridings, one of which is mine. It is not published by the government or by cabinet. It is prepared by the Liberal Party of Canada, dated January, 1981, and it is entitled "Ridings twinned with members". I shall read a portion from it as follows: