

Privilege—Mr. Yewchuk

parliament, or in the extreme must be construed as irresponsible reporting.

● (1520)

Sir, I have been impressed since my arrival in Ottawa in 1972 that the two principal academic disciplines used to prepare the would-be politicians are law and political science. Many students of political science go into the public service, becoming administrators of policy and advisers to those making decisions. Their training may best be described as the art of the possible, not concentrating on idealism but on the practicalities of the political system. The decisions, sir, are made by the legislators, many of whom have studied law on the general principle that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again, I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member. Much of what he is saying, of course, has value. It is not that these are not important observations on the role of a member of parliament, whether or not he is also a member of the medical profession, as in this particular case. However, the question the Chair has to decide at the moment is in respect of a rather narrow and confined question of privilege. On the one hand, hon. members are concerned about the proceedings of a standing committee and the remarks of another hon. member. There were certain procedural difficulties involved which I have already exposed. The second point has to do with the comments on the reporting of a journalist vis-à-vis the functions of the standing committee, or the motives of an hon. member of this House.

In both instances there is, and has been, a clear and unbroken line of precedents to the effect that neither constitutes a question of privilege. I am trying to extend to the hon. member as much leeway as possible in the matter, but there are several other members who seek the floor and I wonder if the hon. member might continue on that basis.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same question of privilege. If there has been a reflection on any member of this House by another member, there is a privilege. There was an incident not too long ago when this House took upon itself an examination of the very point, only it was regarding a different form of the media. It is important, sir, that this House not sit idly by, letting anyone play with its morals or standard. The duty is upon you, sir, to protect us by allowing members of parliament to speak their piece when they feel their reputations as members of this House have been challenged.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a very brief comment. I am sure the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk) who has raised this issue has given the House a full, fair and responsible report of what happened in proceedings about which I know nothing. I have no intention of saying anything about the conduct of members or persons in this House or elsewhere, whether on CTV or otherwise, but I would ask that if Your Honour's ruling on this matter in any way relates to statements made by or the conduct of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Miss Holt), your decision be reserved so that she may,

[Mr. Holmes.]

depending on your intention in this matter, be heard by members of the House.

An hon. Member: She knew it was coming up and that is why she is not here.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. Holmes) was in the process of speaking.

Mr. Holmes: I have three or four short paragraphs, Mr. Speaker, but I will bow to the wishes of the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: I want to make it perfectly clear that I was not trying to stop the hon. member for Lambton-Kent.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I simply want him to keep his remarks within the narrow confines of the question of privilege.

An hon. Member: Sit down, then, and let him do so.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Holmes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You are most gracious, under the circumstances. Perhaps I may just conclude. I was talking about the composition of parliaments and the predominance of lawyers and graduates of political science among those who make the decisions, as we see it. I think all we need do is look at the predominance of lawyers in the cabinet. The same is true of the international political scene, where a great many are trained in the arts of existing political life, which in effect is an adversary system. I want to suggest, in all seriousness, that the adversary system is not always productive and in today's society of turbulence such a system, I believe, in many instances is outmoded.

I am the first to recognize the effectiveness and importance of the academic disciplines to which I have referred in this House, and I know it is not necessary for me to defend their presence. However, many of the problems in today's society, touching not only the lives of Canadians but on all individuals within our global community, should be approached with reasoning and not confrontation and partisan politics. It is my opinion—I believe, shared by others—that there are times when adversary politics could be replaced by an intelligent, unemotional assessment of objective facts combined with a genuine concern for human beings.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Holmes: I would suggest to you, sir, that there are many members in this chamber who approach their duties in this manner, recognizing this may have minimal media appeal, but firm in the belief that such a role can be constructive in our political process.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few brief words on this question of privilege relating to the conduct of a committee. I would address my remarks specifically to the question regarding