

Points of Order

Mr. Speaker, the minister rose on a point of order. He used the time he was allowed to present a motion which, according to my reading of the Standing Orders, is highly unusual. It seems to me that it was highly irregular for the Chair to accept a motion on a point of order.

Some hon. members: He is right!

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, he did not have the floor to present a motion. Furthermore, if he did have a question of privilege, the Chair had a duty to decide if there was a *prima facie* case before the House, that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gauthier: Will you keep quiet! I know what I am talking about. A *prima facie* case—

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if we could just reflect for a moment. I am going to hear the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, but I think it is appropriate that we reflect for a moment on exactly where we are.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister rose on a point of order. He talked about privilege. What the Deputy Prime Minister was doing from a procedural point of view was seeking the unanimous consent of the House for something. That happens regularly around here. It may be a contentious issue, but that is what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister was doing, and I had to hear him.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier has the floor and he is entitled, as did the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, to be heard and I am going to hear him.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I just remember a few things about procedure. The first thing is that we need to have order in this House. The Deputy Prime Minister cannot bootleg this kind of motion without getting unanimous consent to put it and I am telling him now he will not get unanimous consent to put the motion.

Mr. Speaker, they will not drag the Queen into an argument between the Senate and this House. I think it is rather uncalled for—

An hon. member: Scandalous.

Mr. Gauthier: And scandalous, yes, scandalous for that government—desperate is the word—to call the Queen into question at this time.

I will not give this thing any more importance than to say, you are all wet.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister said that his privileges had been breached by the fact that a single Liberal senator has made some public utterances. I want to say that many of us feel that our privileges are breached by the mere existence of the Senate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that the hon. member for Kamloops would want to assist the Chair in this matter.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, as a result of this enthusiastic response on behalf of the government members, perhaps we should consider the abolishment of this unelected Senate as soon as possible.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I must say to the hon. member for Kamloops that that is something that I cannot do.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I accept your gracious comments. I guess I could say on behalf of my party that we certainly would give unanimous consent right now to consider a motion to abolish the unelected Senate.

An hon. member: Write it out right now.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, on this issue, the Deputy Prime Minister knows the rules of the House probably as well as anyone in the House, and he knows that this incident happened back in September and there has been ample opportunity to consider this.

An hon. member: Two days ago.

Mr. Riis: Two days ago, my apologies. Mr. Speaker, first of all, this is a matter that ought to have been raised in the Senate. There are Conservatives in the Senate. If there were privileges that were breached, they would have been senatorial privileges. I say to my hon. friend, the Deputy Prime Minister, that if he was serious in seeking unanimous consent to deal with this issue, there is a procedure that we always follow. He knows the procedure—he has been part of it for many, many years—where a discussion would have taken place and we would have sought to discuss this in a serious way.

The motion is debatable and we would have set aside, presumably, time today during the government's agenda to debate this important issue. If the Deputy Prime Minister is interested, we are prepared at the House Leaders meeting that will take place momentarily to