

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 31, 1991

The House met at 10.00 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVILEGE

MEMBER FOR PORT MOODY—COQUITLAM

Mr. Speaker: I should advise the House that I have received a number of applications on a question of privilege.

• (1010)

I might indicate to the House before we commence that I expect and I know that all hon. members will conduct whatever debate is to ensue here with the dignity to which this House is entitled, keeping in mind our traditions.

I call upon, first of all, the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a question of privilege pursuant to Standing Order 48 and according to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Sixth Edition*. Paragraph 114 defines a question of privilege as saying:

(1) By its nature, a question of privilege is of such importance that it may be raised at any time.

Standing Order 48 makes provision for the precedence of a question of privilege over all other business of the House.

That is how seriously I take this question of privilege. I gave the Chair notice last night. In fairness to the member concerned, I also notified the hon. member because of my deep respect for him as we entered this Chamber at the same time.

It pains me to raise what I have to raise in this question of privilege but I had to weigh my respect for the hon. member and the respect for the authority of this House,

and the respect for the authority of the Mace and the Speaker.

My question of privilege arises from proceedings in this Chamber at approximately 8.10 p.m. on Wednesday, October 30, 1991 when the Speaker was in the process of adjourning the House until the next sitting day.

We have Standing Orders which regulate the behaviour of members when the House rises at the end of a sitting. The Standing Orders ensure that House proceedings are carried out with a degree of ceremonial order. If I can quote to the hon. members our Standing Order 16(3) which reads:

No member may pass between the Chair and the Table, nor between the Chair and the Mace when the Mace has been taken off the Table by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Standing Order 16(4) says:

When the House adjourns, Members shall keep their seats until the Speaker has left the Chair.

Last evening, the Speaker did adjourn the House with ceremonial order and with dignity. The members who stayed in their seats according to Standing Order 16(4) were shocked to observe an hon. member of this House, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, get out of his seat, run down the Chamber right in front of us and grab the Mace which was on the shoulder of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

The Speaker was still in his chair when the member got out of his seat and began running down the floor of the Chamber, clearly debasing the decorum of the House and contravening Standing Order 16(4).

I am not accusing the member of contravening Standing Order 16(3). When the member was clutching the Mace, he was behind the Sergeant-at-Arms, not between the Chair and the Mace.

The contempt for the authority of the Mace, which is the authority of the House, was an even worse offence than contravening Standing Orders 16(3) and 16(4).

The Mace is the Speaker's authority and it is this authority that maintains decorum and order which under