

Member is asking you, Mr. Speaker, to say that there has been a breach of his privileges because a member in that meeting said that he had been told by his supervisor, who in turn was at a meeting at which he was informed, that something took place. I would suggest that that is not evidence at all; that is nothing. Certainly that would be something the parliamentary committee itself might wish to pursue if it thought it had any basis. However, an unsubstantiated allegation like that is not something of which you, Mr. Speaker, should take cognizance and make a ruling that there has been a *prima facie* breach of the Hon. Member's privilege.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that if it were your role to try to track down and investigate every unsubstantiated allegation by the Hon. Member for Burnaby, the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure would be very, very busy.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear from the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) in due course. The Hon. Member for London East (Mr. Jepson).

Mr. Jim Jepson (London East): Mr. Speaker, I just want to reinforce what my colleagues on the government side, as members of the justice committee, have very capably said in addressing the facts surrounding our visit to the various penitentiaries and our meetings with the various officials and inmates involved in the penitentiary system.

I think what I find personally repugnant about this whole situation is the obvious political posturing—

Mr. Speaker: I have listened very carefully to the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney) and the Hon. Member for Niagara Falls (Mr. Nicholson), and of course I will hear the Hon. Member for London East.

However, in the interests of moving things along without interrupting, perhaps I exercised some latitude in allowing some of the remarks made by both the Hon. Member for Ottawa West and the Hon. Member for Niagara Falls in respect of the Hon. Member for Burnaby.

Whatever Hon. Members may feel, yesterday in his intervention the Hon. Member for Burnaby put forward facts as he thought they were and, except for perhaps some difference of opinion between himself and the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata), was not making any comments concerning the motivation or the dedication of other members of the committee.

As a consequence I think that the Hon. Member for London East could help me by addressing the question of privilege itself. He, like other Hon. Members, was there and I want very much to hear his point of view. However, I would ask Hon. Members to stay away from impugning in any way the motives of other Hon. Members, especially when the Chair must listen to these interventions and decide legal points of procedure. Obviously there can be more latitude exercised when we are in full swing of debate, but we are listening here to careful

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arguments on a difficult matter and I know that Hon. Members would want to co-operate.

Mr. Jepson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess what I am trying to say, in synopsis, is that as one member of that committee I had total freedom to meet with any prisoner or any group—anybody involved in the whole process—without management being there to monitor or sanitize those opportunities.

We had opportunities to talk with prisoners in the hole, as they would describe it, or in protective custody, with lifers' groups, inmates' groups, parole officers, case management work officers—virtually everybody involved. There was total freedom.

For the Hon. Member for Burnaby to suggest that this was a fixed arrangement, a sanitized hearing of the various groups, I think is grossly unfair and one which lacks any element of fact.

Mr. Speaker: I know the Hon. Member for Burnaby will resist the temptation perhaps to do other than abide by the very gentle admonitions of the Chair.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I will certainly abide by the gentle and sage admonitions of the Chair, as always.

I wanted to respond to a couple of points which were made this afternoon by my colleagues from the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General. Obviously I will not respond to any suggestion as to motives. I think that Your Honour has dealt with those, and I do not think any purpose would be served by indicating that the reason for this intervention quite obviously is my concern with respect to the integrity of the committee process itself.

I will make a couple of points. First of all, it has been suggested—and it seems to be at the heart of the argument that is made by all three of my committee colleagues—that the information which I brought before Your Honour yesterday with respect to the possibility of an attempt to control or manipulate the flow of evidence to the justice committee in some way should be disregarded because it was not in fact direct evidence; it was not evidence that came directly from an individual who was present at the meeting at which the alleged or attempted interference took place.

Surely it is clear why that particular submission must be rejected by Your Honour. The nature of the alleged wrongdoing in this case is precisely the fact that senior supervisors in the Ontario region allegedly were told that if in any way they were critical of their employer, or if they were critical of the Government or of the policies of Correctional Service Canada, that could affect their future career prospects within Correctional Service Canada. That is the context within which this problem arose.

I would submit, with respect, that it is totally unreasonable to argue that, because one of those individuals who apparently