

Question of Privilege

that hon. member. However, since the question involves the privileges of many members it is certainly the most orderly and business-like procedure to discuss the whole question, without undue regard for the niceties of the rules.

Mr. Speaker: I point out to the hon. member that the rules are more than niceties.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: The rules have to be respected by every hon. member, including the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. There is one question before the house. The hon. member feels that he has a right to discuss it. I am not going to deprive him of this right, but I hope he will discuss this matter within the rules.

Mr. Nugent: I assure Your Honour that I shall try and stick strictly to the rules. I was perhaps a little careless in what I said. What I meant to say was this. Since the various questions of privilege are so intertwined, it is difficult to restrict one's remarks and make sure that they apply only to the question of privilege just raised, rather than including the remarks made this afternoon.

The matter before the house as a question of privilege deals fundamentally, I think, with the responsibility of one member of this house toward another in the sort of remarks he can make and the sort of attacks he can make on another member either in his capacity as a private member, as a member of the cabinet or as the Prime Minister, depending upon the member's status at the particular time.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Nugent: Yes, sir.

Mr. Nicholson: The hon. member referred to the fact that these statements were made in the house. Great attention has been drawn earlier today to the fact that certain statements were made outside the house today. Is it not a fact that any member who has cause to complain about statements made outside the house can resort to the courts?

Mr. Nielsen: The question I raised involved statements made inside the house.

Mr. Nugent: I thought I said "statements made inside and outside the house" because sometimes a statement made outside the house could only have meaning if it were made inside the house. You have to consider

it as a course of conduct followed between members of the house. I submit that the most serious question that we in this house have to consider is the responsibility—

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Nugent: I would prefer not to hear another argument from the minister at this time.

Mr. Nicholson: Would the hon. member answer the question?

Mr. Nugent: I would prefer not to hear another argument from the minister at this time. I thought that he wished to put a question, but he made an argument. I trust that if he wants to take part in the debate he will grant me the courtesy of finishing my remarks about what I consider to be the responsibility here, and then we may hear from him. The responsibility of the Minister of Justice is, I submit, the business of everyone in this house and statements made by him concern the responsibility of all members.

I know Your Honour had considerable difficulty this afternoon and said that it was possible you might have question of privilege after question of privilege and we would not get very much farther. I submit the matter is so serious that it is the business of this house and is worth the time of this house, if necessary, to consider every question of privilege involved in the minister's action and deal with them one after another until the minister learns his responsibility to this house.

I submit that there are many questions of privilege that have not yet been raised by individual Privy Councillors. In addition, there are questions of privilege that can be raised by every member of this house if we take our duties seriously and take the words "responsible government" seriously. "Responsible government" implies that the government is responsible to this house. It is our duty as members of this house to make sure that the government acts in a responsible manner to this house.

The hon. member for Yukon pointed out very clearly the entire cabinet responsibility for the statements and actions of the Minister of Justice. The government now in power in this country is entitled to run the country only so long as it has the confidence of this house, and we have the right to support them and give them our confidence only so long as the government carries out its duties in a