

Question of Privilege

An hon. Member: Who is backing off now?

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that he has already made his statement. A statement has been made by the minister, and I am sure it is not the wish of the house to engage upon further prolonged debate at this time on this question.

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Speaker, it is open to me to suggest whether I accept this statement, or to bring certain matters to your attention. I think the rules do permit that.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is rising on a point of order now, suggesting that the rules permit him to answer the statement that has been made by the Minister of National Defence. I have some serious doubt about that, but perhaps he would speak to the point of order.

Mr. Nugent: With regard to the citation which was quoted yesterday by Your Honour as to the method of dealing with this problem, which perhaps has been alluded to only fleetingly before, where complaint is made against a member, and before being required to withdraw while the house considers the matter, he is given a chance to make a statement. I do not have the citation in May in front of me, but if some explanation or clarification is required in answer thereto, he may be heard further. I would ask Your Honour to consider—

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member kindly give me the citation? I can assure him that this is something entirely new to the Chair. The citation he will find in May is to the effect that the member who is accused and whose statement or conduct is being impugned—in this instance the Minister of National Defence—should be given the opportunity to make a statement, which is what has now been done. I am sure there is no suggestion in May or any precedent to the effect that after that statement has been made the hon. member who raised the matter originally should be allowed to make a second statement. Perhaps the hon. member could find for me the citation or a precedent which would justify the position he is now taking.

Mr. Nugent: The citation is in May, Mr. Speaker. Your Honour quoted last night the citation at page 143, and it follows immediately thereafter and concerns the method of

[Mr. Hellyer.]

dealing with these points. It says that where a member makes a statement it may be accepted by the house or he may be asked for clarification. I think it follows within one page thereafter.

I do not want to mislead Your Honour, and I do not have May in front of me, but it does seem to me that a statement is not always completely explanatory and that the house may ask for clarification of it; and I am asking for clarification of it from the minister.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member rose on a point of order claiming that there is a precedent or a citation which he can bring forward in support of his claim that he should be allowed to make some clarification of the statement made by the minister. I have May in front of me; the hon. member can obtain the book from the table. The hon. member said that within one page of the citation that was quoted yesterday there is such a statement. I have the book before me, but I certainly cannot find anything here to justify the claim made by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Far from trying to limit the hon. member in his contention that he should be allowed to speak a second time on the question he has raised, I think he will admit and all hon. members of the house will agree that I have been as lenient as possible.

Mr. Nugent: On a point of order, I have not asked to speak a second time on the point I raised. I asked to speak once on the explanation raised by the minister.

Mr. Speaker: The advice I have received is that there is no precedent to justify the position the hon. member seeks to take now. I have looked at the citations. I am advised from the table that there is nothing to support the contention advanced by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona, and I must take my responsibilities and face the situation as it is.

The hon. member yesterday raised a very limited question of privilege. It had nothing to do with that general motion which he seeks to move at this time and which I suggest to him far exceeds the very limited signification of the point he raised yesterday. The hon. member suggested that the Minister of National Defence had used words outside the house which impugned the very honour and integrity of the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. I have studied those words. I have looked into the matter. I can