

Question of Privilege

Mr. Horner (Acadia): What are they afraid of?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I now have the report from the Speaker's office that there is no written notice, that no written notice has been found. This is the situation facing the Chair now.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, you stated in the course of your remarks—and I do not want to quarrel with Mr. Speaker—that you were in your office from 11.30, on. That was not the case when I had a phone call put through to your office at 1.30, and I think, sir, you will have to hear me on that.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. The Speaker was in his office, and this is perhaps a little picayune in the sense that the Speaker took visitors to room 202 for approximately 25 seconds around, I would say, two o'clock. But the Speaker has been in his office, had lunch in his office, and worked in his office since approximately eleven o'clock this morning.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, without questioning your ruling in any way, and I recognize that under the strict application of the rules it is correct, I would make a plea to the house to give unanimous consent to have this matter heard now rather than delaying the hearing of it for 24 hours, or less than that, because I will certainly raise it tomorrow in any event.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair did what could be done in the circumstances. I was quite pleased and prepared to give effect to the suggestion of the hon. member for Calgary North to invite the consensus of the house to waive the provisions of the standing order, but there was no unanimous agreement. The Chair has no alternative whatsoever except to turn down the motion of the hon. member. I assume he will give written notice in the meantime and a new ruling can be given then.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, I just made an appeal to the house. I will now make an appeal to the Prime Minister that he agree this matter should be heard at the present time because it was only on the Liberal side of the house that there was any opposition.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. That motion—

Mr. Starr: The Prime Minister sits silent.

Mr. Pearson: Obeying the rules.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Starr: Covering up behind the rules is what you have been doing.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling has been made.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, so far as this is concerned, if this motion should be put tomorrow I trust that it will not be stated that according to the rules it was not raised in time.

Mr. Speaker: I think there is no question about this. I appreciate the point made by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) and I really do not think 24 hours would make that much difference. I myself would not raise that objection.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Mr. Speaker, it makes this difference that some of us have to sit in the House of Commons in the presence of somebody who is not a gentleman.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order please.

Some hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice now that I will raise this matter in an hour's time.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to give notice to the hon. member that he has to do it according to the rules.

Mr. Churchill: May I have your guidance, Mr. Speaker. The rule, No. 17, says:

Whenever any matter of privilege arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately.

I received in my office, just at 2.30 p.m., the *Ottawa Journal*, which contains certain statements made by the Minister of Justice. That, sir, has come to my attention just within that time. Surely this is the proper time to raise a question of privilege based on these statements.

Mr. Speaker: It is subject to the rule, and the rule does not allow the hon. member to raise it at this time. The rule is very simple and clear. I invite the hon. member to give written notice to the Chair according to the rule. Unless the rules are changed, they will not be interpreted in this way. This is the only way the Chair can look at the situation when the rule is clear and simple. I interpret it the way I see it. I would invite members of the house to follow the rule and give written notice such as is suggested by the standing order.