

Question of Privilege

I think the suggestion was agreed to by hon. members this afternoon that the Chair be given an opportunity, as is always given to a Speaker, to consider this serious matter and to look into the motions to see whether they should be received, whether they are in order and to render a decision to the house.

We must also take into account the fact that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has put a motion to adjourn the house at eight o'clock for the precise purpose of giving the Chair an opportunity to look into these matters.

Mr. Knowles: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: In my view we should wait until the motion is put to the house. If the house is adjourned the Chair will then have an opportunity to think about all these things. I might say, to be very candid, that is what I would like to do. That is what I tried to do to the best of my ability during the dinner hour. I thought I would have an opportunity then to study these matters, but it was brought to my attention in the Speaker's chambers that a new question of privilege had been raised and it was suggested that I come back to the chamber. I apologize to the hon. member for Yukon if I was a few minutes late, but I did not expect this turn of events.

I think the situation is clear. There are two motions before the Chair. There was general agreement this afternoon that the Chair should be given an opportunity to look into them. The motion put by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was put for that very purpose. It will be voted on at eight o'clock and if it is carried I will have the opportunity of looking into the matter so that I may render a decision tomorrow. If it is not carried, I hope I will still have a chance to return to my chambers to consider the very serious suggestions that were made this afternoon and this evening by the hon. member for Yukon. I believe hon. members have an obligation to the Speaker to allow him to study matters of this kind. I am not a learned member of this House of Commons. I have been here just a few years and I am guided by the older members and other experienced people who have been here for some time. They assure me that it is normal for hon. members to give their Speaker, the man they have elected to this job, an opportunity to look into this type of matter. If hon. members refuse to give me an opportunity to return to my chambers I will remain here but, as I

[Mr. Speaker.]

have suggested, they have an obligation to give me an opportunity to study the matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Terence Nugent (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, the questions before Your Honour deal with whether or not the two motions are in order and, as I had the occasion to say this afternoon,—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will just say one thing more. If the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Nugent) feels the Chair should not have the opportunity of returning to the Speaker's chambers to consider this matter, I will stay and listen to the hon. member.

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Speaker, I feel that you should have an opportunity, but I wish to say something about that opportunity. It is my view that the question of whether the motion is or is not in order does not dispose of the main question of privilege which was raised this afternoon, or the question of privilege which was raised this evening.

• (7:30 p.m.)

There are several methods by which the house might deal with this question of privilege. Two motions are before Your Honour, either one or both of which may be found to be out of order, or Your Honour may decide that they are in order. With all due respect, sir, that does not solve the problem. That is only part of the problem with which the house is now dealing. I submit that had Your Honour ruled immediately and found one or other motion in order, it would not have finished the debate on the question of privilege; it would just have made sure that we knew exactly the procedure we were following in order to deal with the questions of privilege which have been raised.

I submit, with all due respect, that the decision the house arrived at this afternoon was that there was a *prima facie* case of privilege. The next step, since there is a question of privilege raised by an hon. member, is this: What is the best way for the house to deal with the question of privilege? I suggest, sir, that it is a transgression of the privileges of members of this house that we are now attempting to solve. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) found it necessary to raise a new one in order to revive the debate. I presume that in accordance with a strict application of the rules, I should speak only on the question of privilege raised by