

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member has illustrated how many various issues were raised, obliquely as they may have been, during the debate on Friday.

I apologize to the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom). I have notice of a question of privilege, and I will hear the Hon. Member.

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PRIVILEGE

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I have to rise this morning on a matter which I think is a very serious question of privilege reflecting on all Members of this House. It arises out of comments made on Friday by the Member of Parliament for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer), which I think reflect upon Parliament and may be in contempt of Parliament itself.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The point of order is pertinent to this question of privilege?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, Mr. Speaker, my point of order is directly related to the point of privilege.

The Member quite rightly brought the question of privilege to the attention of the Chair and the Chamber at the earliest possible moment. But, in view of the nature of my colleague's question of privilege, I submit to you that it is inappropriate that it proceed at this time without the Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer) being in the Chamber to hear the comments of Members, and to participate in the debate. We will try to reach him immediately in order that he may be in attendance for any comments on this matter. I would ask you to defer it until that time.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville has raised a matter. Without ruling as to whether it is a question of privilege, the Chair has no hesitation in saying that it is an important matter, and it may well be a grievance of some weight, and, depending on what is heard, it might be a question of privilege.

I would ask Hon. Members to consider that it has been my practice whenever a matter was raised as a question of privilege to ask if the Hon. Member who might be the Member complained of was in the Chamber. It has been the disposition of the House to try to be as reasonable as possible in ensuring that when a complaint is made of the conduct of another Hon. Member that if that Hon. Member can be in the Chamber, even if it requires a deferral of the matter for a short period of time, that is probably the better course.

Having that in mind, I wonder if the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville who now has his point on the record, could defer his remarks until a little later on in the day when the

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Hon. Member, whose remarks are complained of, might be in the Chamber. That would be the disposition of the Chair.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with what you have suggested. My only concern is that, for reasons that we may not be able to predict, the Member may be away from the House for some length of time. We would have some concern that this issue be raised at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Speaker: I can assure Hon. Members that the Chair is very cognizant of the concern just mentioned by the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy). Without in any way imputing anything to any Member, the Chair would expect that the Hon. Member would be here soon.

The Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mr. Nystrom: In that case, Mr. Speaker, out of respect for your feelings in the matter, I will wait until the Hon. Member appears in the House, on the understanding that he will be here soon. I do not receive that understanding directly from the Parliamentary Secretary, but I understand that he is not far away.

Mr. Speaker: I think the House has the sense of the Speaker's intention in this regard.

On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon).

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POINTS OF ORDER

ACCURACY OF STATEMENTS ON PETITIONS

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my point of order concerns the petition that was just submitted by the Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone). During her presentation she said that there were thousands of signatures on the petition. An examination of the petition indicates that there are less than 375 names on it.

● (1150)

This constant exaggeration of the names on a petition is demeaning what is a very honourable and time honoured practice of Members of Parliament to present petitions on behalf of their constituents.

It is a good petition. Its wording is quite suitable and the petitioners raise a good point about the tariff on books. That feeling is shared by many Canadians. Why should Members demean this practice by these phoney numbers and passing petitions about from one Member to another to make it appear that there is more feeling out there in the constituencies than there is? It is beyond me.

I know I have your agreement on this matter, Mr. Speaker, but we do not seem to be able to get any probity among the