

*Privilege—Mr. La Salle*

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I would like to point out that I will readily support the motion . . .

This shows, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Joliette is confused, he cannot support a motion that was not proposed to the House, that has just been declared out of order by the Speaker. I refer to the House of Commons debates of December 13 and more precisely to page 2228.

Mr. Speaker, his question of privilege was not followed by a motion. And this is my point. All he said was this:

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that his insinuation is unacceptable in my case. I trust the House will ask the hon. member to be more specific and make his accusations in the public forum and not take shelter behind parliamentary immunity.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Joliette is not interested to see the matter dealt with in this House, but he would like the hon. member for Témiscamingue to repeat the same remarks outside this House.

He resumes his seat, he does not have any question nor does he move any motion. The hon. member for Peace River, who is a tricky man as we all know, noticed the mistake of his colleague from Joliette. He lost no time in standing up and saying this:

I would just point out, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) having risen now, it might be presumed that he has reserved the right to bring up the matter and move a motion, perhaps on Monday or Tuesday. In that case, he would have to send Your Honour notice. By rising as he has now in respect of the allegation which he has charged appear to have been made against him, he has, I believe taken the proper course, and has reserved his right to make a motion later.

As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 17, as amended October 14, 1971, it is stated and I quote:

17. (1) Whenever any matter of privilege arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately.

However, when that happened in the House yesterday, neither the member for Peace River nor the member for Joliette were moving a motion. Both were making allegations and the member for Peace River gave a hand to the member for Joliette when he said that perhaps or probably he would move a motion later.

And at that time, Mr. Speaker completed what he had said initially on a motion moved pursuant to Standing Order 43 and stated:

Order, please. As I have endeavoured to indicate to the hon. member, I take it he has raised a question of privilege at this time personally. I would prefer to reserve on it. This is a matter of some importance and I could perhaps make a decision on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, this is why the question arises again today. I would like to know why the Chair can reserve until Monday a question or a motion of which it has not been advised in the House to begin with.

Mr. Speaker, if that becomes a practice, that would mean that any hon. member could stand up without giving notice to the Chair, as provided under Standing Order 17(2), and orally advise the Speaker in the House and not in his office, that he will rise a question of privilege followed later by a motion. And the Chair agrees with that.

When the Chair agrees with such a procedure, with the help of that cunning fox the hon. member for Peace River, we are left to assume that the Chair agrees with the content of the question, whereas legally or in procedural

[Mr. Fortin.]

terms the Chair has never been precisely asked to deal with the heart of the matter on procedural grounds.

I am therefore, Mr. Speaker, suggesting that the drafting of the motion is faulty.

Besides, Mr. Speaker, the House is in no way entitled to oblige an hon. member to bring a charge against somebody else when that member has accused himself. The hon. member for Témiscamingue laid no definite accusation against anybody in the House. And as reported on page 2217 of *Hansard*, he himself said, I quote:

. . . to the effect that the hon. member for Témiscamingue has made accusations against all hon. members in this House . . .

The hon. member for Témiscamingue said:

. . . that was simply not the case.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is not accusing anybody. He is accusing himself, which is quite different, for that is what the matter is about. I therefore believe there is no question of privilege for that second reason, since the committee to which that question will eventually be referred will have no alternative but to repeat to the hon. member for Témiscamingue the very same accusations he laid against himself.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, no one or nothing will be much better off for it, since on the other hand the hon. member for Témiscamingue said on page 2217—

[*English*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am having considerable difficulty hearing the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin). The question of privilege to which the hon. member is addressing himself concerns alleged accusations made against other hon. members and members of the press. I think it is a matter of considerable importance to all hon. members particularly and to the electorate since it touches relations between the electorate and the press and the press and the electorate. I am most anxious to hear the hon. member if he will continue his remarks.

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I was just saying that the House cannot compel a member to accuse himself before a committee, when this member did so in the House. For that second reason, I believe that this is not a question of privilege since, as I just said, the committee might only have the member for Témiscamingue repeat the same accusations he raised against himself, by showing that the article had really been written.

Mr. Speaker, I connect this question to the fact that for more than five sittings, day after day, the Progressive Conservative party has made malicious and serious insinuations against Crown ministers in the House. Never have the Progressive Conservatives dared lay definite charges against any of the ministers. They only made insinuations. And now, Mr. Speaker, those same members would like the hon. member of Témiscamingue to accept being questioned by a committee, while he accused himself and Progressive Conservatives never had the guts to accuse the ministers on alleged insinuations.

In the case of the Crown ministers, Mr. Speaker, I will humbly point out to you that it took time for the House to