

Privilege

to the House as I said. If the House agrees, it sends it to committee. The hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Riis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the spirit of your suggestions, let me respond to what I think was an offer by my hon. friend the government Whip and hon. member for Calgary West. He referred to a statement I made in the House and some comments I made in that statement. He suggested that if I would consider withdrawing those comments, that he would then consider withdrawing the allegations he made against me personally.

Let me read this, Mr. Speaker, and then I have a comment I would like to make. I think it is worth repeating.

Mr. Speaker, this morning Canadians awoke to the news that Conservatives want to be above the law. Yesterday—

An hon. member: No.

An hon. member: You're just throwing gas on the fire.

Mr. Riis: I'm coming to a resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the Tories used their majority muscle in a legislative committee to force through changes in the law which govern MPs and Senators. They want to be tipped off to any RCMP criminal investigations into their parliamentary affairs.

In other words, the Conservatives are creating a two-tiered justice system—one level for Tory MPs and another for ordinary Canadians.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Justice said there could only be one law for Canadians. She told the House: "We cannot pick and choose when we want to apply the law and we cannot pick and choose which laws we want to obey". A few weeks later her colleagues are looking for special laws for Tory MPs.

There seem to be—

Well, it goes on and on.

If it will facilitate resolving this issue, I will withdraw these comments.

Mr. Hawkes: I will withdraw any one of the comments I made that he would like me to withdraw, then we could move to the next one. There is a series that occurred outside the House that is equal or of more concern in terms of accusations. That is what I thought if we were to delay, we could resolve.

I am willing to withdraw some things I said. Okay? What this does, I think, Mr. Speaker, is withdraw the allegation that Tories want to be tipped off to any RCMP criminal investigations into their parliamentary affairs. It is my conviction that we have never wanted that. The charge that we did want that was extremely serious—

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if the hon. member for Calgary West would take his chair.

Now, both members have indicated that, subject to a little bit of discussion with respect to which statements are to be withdrawn, they would be prepared to move seriatim through them. The hon. member for Kamloops has just taken a serious issue and has said, "I withdraw that".

It seems to me that if we exercised a little bit of good sense here, this matter could be adjourned while the two hon. members decide what other retractions they might make, because in the interest of this place the two of them have to work together on committees and, as I say, especially the board.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I really seek your guidance. I understood clearly from what my hon. friend, the government whip, said and I suggested that if he was to withdraw the allegations he has levied against me, then I would be prepared to move on it, accept that, and discuss our concerns regarding Bill C-79, which are very serious.

He then rose and said: "I will consider that if my hon. friend would withdraw his comments that he made in this House on October 11." Hearing his offer, I stood in good faith and in the best interest of this institution and withdrew those remarks. Now surely my hon. friend can live up to his half of the bargain and withdraw the allegations. If he does that, the matter is settled and we get on with resolving the issue. Mr. Speaker, I have just withdrawn those comments to enable this issue to be resolved. I ask my hon. friend to do the honourable thing and do the same.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, if the the hon. member is talking about the allegations I made in the House, I will withdraw them. Okay? There are some very serious allegations about the behaviour of myself, the committee members, and my members, that were made outside the House, at the 6.45 press conference on October 10 and