

National Defence Act Amendment

used the word "lie" or suggested that someone has lied, as the Minister of National Defence had the temerity to do the other day, at which time the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra raised no objection. I understand the sensitivity of the hon. member opposite because he recognizes in the technique I have described something that hon. members opposite have been following which the hon. member hoped they could keep hidden. He hoped that the kind of methods they employ would not become obvious.

The truth may hurt, Mr. Chairman, but I suggest that there has been no bending or breaking of the rules in this case. It is simply a case of the sensibilities of hon. members opposite being offended, as they usually are when something does not suit them or flatter their point of view.

Mr. Byrne: Mr. Chairman, on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, who for a time was chairman of the defence committee, may I say first of all in defence of the hon. member that from the time he took the chair he endeavoured to work toward a solution without the committee taking a recorded division. He attempted to have matters resolved without a vote being taken. No vote was taken at any time up until the committee began to deal with the bill clause by clause. I realize that I am not as articulate as some of the lawyer members opposite. However, I feel that this is an important matter and the charge that the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra has misled the house should not be allowed to go unchallenged.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I now wish to refer to proceedings that took place in the house on March 3. The hon. member as found on page 13702 of *Hansard*, pointed out that he had endeavoured to determine the consensus of the committee regarding sitting on the afternoon of March 3. The hon. member said:

I am as willing to admit, as are some hon. members opposite who were in the room this morning, that there was some confusion about whether a motion had been put. I certainly am right, however, in saying that I suggested—

The hon. member did not say he put the question.

—we meet at two o'clock, following which there was some dissension in respect of the idea of meeting at two o'clock, and then I pleaded with the committee to meet this afternoon in order to further the business of the committee. Finally,

[Mr. Nugent.]

as the bells were ringing, I asked whether members were willing to meet this afternoon and hands were raised indicating willingness to meet this afternoon.

There was a show of hands.

An hon. Member: No, there was not.

Mr. Byrne: I am sure that at least four members, myself included, raised their hands to show they were willing to sit that afternoon.

An hon. Member: What about the others?

Mr. Byrne: The chairman did not say that a vote was taken. He asked for an indication of the consensus of the committee and he determined that a substantial group was willing to sit in the afternoon. He simply ruled on that consensus. He did not mislead the house in any way on March 3.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Chairman—

The Chairman: I think the Chair has heard enough to rule on the question.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): On a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman, arising from the statement made by the hon. member—

The Chairman: Order, please. I must point out to the committee that an allegation of fact does not constitute a question of privilege. A question of order is before the committee and I hope that the committee will allow me to rule on the point of order and make a few comments.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Before any ruling is made I wish to call on the written record to answer the hon. member. As found on page 13702 of *Hansard* of March 3, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra said during the course of his remarks:

—I said we should meet this afternoon at two o'clock. There was some dissent and I asked for a show of hands—

May I now turn to the proceedings in the defence committee on March 3 as recorded on page 1960 of the committee reports.

The Chairman: Now, we must get on with it. We will meet this afternoon at two o'clock. I think that would only be fair.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, that is your decision now, autocratically arrived at.

The Chairman: I am always at the—

Mr. Churchill: No. This is the Chairman's decision. I want that on the record.