

Privilege

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam has expressed his apologies and regret. He has also said that he holds this place, and the members in it, in highest esteem. This does not come as a surprise to us. The hon. member for Kamloops has, of course, made a painful, and as I say, a difficult decision with dignity and frankness.

I am conscious of the fact that this matter ought to be dealt with as soon as possible. The motion is to bring the hon. member to the bar. Clearly there is a *prima facie* case in this matter and I would ask hon. members to bear with me, at least for an appropriate moment, because I am going to consider exactly what our practice has been in the past when there has been a motion to bring a member to the bar. I shall try to clarify that and return to the House as soon as possible.

In the meantime, we shall proceed with Routine Proceedings.

The hon. member for Kamloops, on a point of order.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, part of the difficulty of last evening arose when there was a breach from the tradition, in my judgment, of the way Private Members' Hour was handled.

I simply want to seek guidance more than anything. I was unfortunately ill when this incident took place and was not in the House when the Whips and so on got involved in Private Members' Business. Perhaps the more appropriate thing to do would be to ask my colleague from Winnipeg Transcona, who was watching the proceedings more carefully than I, to make a few comments at this point. I see this as something on which we need some guidance from the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: I am fully aware of what the hon. member is raising, but I am not at all sure that this is the most appropriate time to engage in this. I get some sense that, in view of everything, there is not a disposition in the House to get into a debate on it.

Hon. members know that a vote takes place when both the Whips come in. That sometimes means that the Whips come in earlier than the expected time for the bell. I understand that is the point of concern for the hon. member. However, I would ask hon. members to

leave this matter, at least for the moment, and perhaps, with some discussion, we can return to it.

I think it would be appropriate to proceed with Routine Proceedings.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understand your appropriate desire to have time for reflection on what to do. I am not trying to delay that. But if it is your judgment that we should not deal with this other issue, which in no way bears upon your judgment on what has already been before you, and we should deal with that at another time, then that is fine with me. But I would like to know what you suggest as being that other time. I think there is a legitimate point of order to be dealt with here as to the role of the Whips in voting on Private Members' Business. I think that is a legitimate concern and separate from the issue which is now before you.

• (1050)

Mr. Speaker: As I indicated, I know that it is a concern to some members. However, given the incident last night and what has taken place today, the Deputy Speaker clearly ruled on that last night. It may have been part of the reason for hon. members' concern, but that has been ruled on.

What I am suggesting is that if the members want to change the rule or change the practice, we might find a more appropriate way to discuss that. I, of course, am always prepared to listen to hon. members on the matter.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure of this but I suspect part of the problem that we are facing in the House at the moment is that the debate that we are about to enter into after Routine Proceedings is completed is a debate in which the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam is a central player. Therefore, he is obviously concerned, and I am sure his party is, as to what role he can play in that.

May I suggest a possible solution for the Speaker. We can proceed with Routine Proceedings, but just before calling Orders of the Day, we can suspend to the call of the Chair to allow the Chair to deliberate. That would