

Privilege—Mr. Kilgour

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order in regard to the remarks by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais). He was inaccurate in one part and I am sure after I bring it to his attention he, being the gentleman that he is, will be more than willing to rise and withdraw those particular remarks.

He indicated that spurious points of order were being raised and that not one was legitimate. I bring to his attention the point of order I raised on March 24, at page 8557 of *Hansard*, on which Your Honour rendered a decision on March 25 which indicated that indeed my point of order was in order and that the government's supplementary estimates were out of order. So I hope the minister will withdraw his remarks that my point of order was spurious.

[Translation]

Mr. Blais: As the saying goes, Madam Speaker, the exception proves the rule, and that was the exception. Indeed there have been 21 points of order which were unacceptable to the Chair. One was acceptable and Your Honour took the right decision under the circumstances.

[English]

Mr. Nielsen: I just want to inject one sentence here—

An hon. Member: That is still too much.

Mr. Nielsen: —because I am not going to comment on something that the Chair has reserved. I would just point out to the minister that when he was sitting on this side of the House a very short time ago, he and his honourable gang of 231 members raised 130 questions of privilege and points of order. And, of course, he is saying none of them were spurious, it was not obstructionism; no, not at all. There is a name for that kind of conduct and those kinds of words, but I have too much respect for Parliament to use unparliamentary expressions in describing them.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blenkarn: Madam Speaker, the impression has been given to this chamber by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais) that we have not co-operated. I point out to the minister that last evening two very important reports of special committees of this House were filed and tabled by a deliberate effort of the House leader on this side. Not only that, Madam Speaker, this House managed to begin consideration of a closure motion improperly brought by the government, but nonetheless a closure motion. All in an effort to expedite the terms of—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Members are debating this point of order. Let us close the matter. I will look at the blues and we will see whether there was anything unparliamentary said. Members can express opinions about everything that goes on in this House, that is quite legitimate. The hon. member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker) on a point of order.

Mr. Thacker: With respect to this afternoon's procedure, Madam Speaker, concerning my question of privilege, may I please ask you when I might expect to be heard?

An hon. Member: Wait in line.

Madam Speaker: I will deal with points of order one at a time. I cannot give the hon. member a time when he should be in the House. There is no question of turns. It is up to me which hon. member I recognize.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, I referred to some quotes from the code of professional conduct for lawyers. I am embarrassed to admit that I used to work for the department that the hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) represents.

An hon. Member: Is that before you were fired?

Mr. Kilgour: It is humiliating to me that the department has been reduced to such a low point. Everyone in that department takes an oath—I think they did when I was there—that they will uphold the law. Everyone in this House, every school boy and school girl, knows that what has happened is that a matter has been found to be illegal—and I am not asking you to rule on that—by five out of eight appeal court judges in two provinces. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is the one who is trying to stay one step ahead of the law by getting every member in this House to vote for a proposition which is obviously of questionable legality. But I am not asking you to rule on that, Madam Speaker, because you feel very strongly that you must find on these points of privilege. What constitutes a question of privilege? What privileges do we have in this House? It seems to me that by your ruling or that of previous Speakers, we have less privileges here than the people out there. An example was referred to yesterday in Stewart's at page 58 of the Speaker having been notified by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) and two other hon. members that they wished to raise questions of privilege as a result of an allegation in a Montreal newspaper that the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River had leaked tax information. It goes on to talk about how this was found to be a question of privilege.

Well, Madam Speaker, if you are going to rule that the lawyers in here cannot be bound by their oaths or their understanding of what their duties as lawyers are—and that ruling affects 100 members—what about the doctors or the women in the example I gave to you? Are we supposed to take the view that: no, we go ahead, we can vote against it? If that is what the privileges of members amount to, they do not amount to anything, in my respectful submission. In other words, anything can go on in this place. The vessel which contains the privileges of a member is empty. What privileges do we have in here if those of us who feel strongly that this gang across the way are trying to make us vote on something which is patently illegal at this point in our judicial history, can only vote or be absent when the matter comes up?

A long time ago Sir Edward Coke showed that nobody's head was above the law, including the king's. It seems to me