

Point of Order—Mr. Lewis

There is another point in the last paragraph—and I would want to check it against what the hon. member just said—which refers to timing. When did the security guards leave the House? Immediately, when the bells stopped ringing? There is the matter of the bells there and I would need to have the report in front of me. I shall get it and see whether there is some discrepancy in the wording of the statement that I made in the House with regard to what actually happened according to witnesses. I think that is all we can do—get witnesses and the opinions of people who were close by and saw what happened.

I retain this, that whoever was in the chair ordered the security guards to leave, and I think he was probably right in doing that. He was well aware of what was going on and acted in accordance with what he should do to protect the privileges of this House.

If this statement satisfies the hon. member at this point, and if he will bear with me and wait until I get the recommendations from the Sergeant-at-Arms, I think we can leave it at that for the time being.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I would just say that I think it is important that you have clarified the difference between a report and a ruling, and to compliment you on the rest of your statement.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Madam Speaker, may I draw your attention to Standing Order 65(13) of the Rules and Standing Orders of this House, which reads as follows:

All matters relating to the administration of the House and the provisions of services and facilities to members shall be deemed to have been referred to the Standing Committee on Management and Members' Services on the first day of each session.

In other words, the language of that section is quite clear: this is a matter to be referred also to the Standing Committee on Management and Members' Services.

Mr. D. M. Collette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order and perhaps I should deal with the last point first, since the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has raised it.

I would submit that what occurred on that evening a couple of weeks ago when the incident took place, was a matter of the privileges of the House. I would say that it would be my view that if any committee were to look into the activities of that evening, it should be the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. What we are dealing with here is the administration of the House as it impinged upon or affected the privileges of members of the House.

I want to comment on something in the statement of the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis). He said that many bodies around the world—and I guess he was referring to governing bodies, administrative bodies or parliaments—do not police themselves. I would ask you to look at the statement of the hon. member very carefully, Madam Speaker. You did

not refer to it exactly, but it is a time-honoured tradition in British parliamentary democracy that the rights and privileges of all members of the House are upheld by those members, through the Speaker, as the first among equals in the House.

I am not speaking for the government on this matter, Madam Speaker, but for myself. I would certainly consult with the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard). I would be very wary of any move to adjudicate the rights and privileges of members of this House by an outside body, an outside police force.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): He didn't say that.

Mr. Collette: I do not want to get into a prolonged debate, Madam Speaker. Certain things were said by the hon. member for Simcoe North. Perhaps I misunderstood him.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): You sure did.

Mr. Collette: I am sorry that his House leader is so irate, but this is a legitimate point that we should all consider and perhaps have further discussions on.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. There is disagreement about which committee this matter should be referred to, if it is referred. I think that is hypothetical because the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) who raised the question is satisfied that I will inform hon. members after further inquiry by the Sergeant-at-Arms, with his recommendations on how we can best ensure security measures in this House.

I take the point raised by the parliamentary secretary. I do not remember the expression that I used, but I was a bit leary of suggesting that someone outside the House of Commons might tell us how to do things and I used an expression, quite purposely, that did not say exactly that, because I am not sure. I am sure that we can get advice from a lot of people but I am not sure whether we can invite people to come in and determine what we should be doing.

* * *

PETITIONS

EXCISE TAX ON NATURAL GAS

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table reports of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petitions presented by hon. members on Thursday, November 6, 1980, and finds that they meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.