

some attack on Members of the House for their role in this particular matter.

● (1540)

While I understand that the Hon. Member is concerned about this particular issue, I ask the Chair to take into account whether the nature of the Hon. Member's point of privilege, and the motion she says she will present if a prima facie case of privilege were to be found, meets the requirements for a prima facie case of privilege and a proper motion founded thereon, or whether, as I said earlier today in the House of Commons, we are not again seeing a matter of dispute as to facts or of a sense of grievance which may well be in the mind of the Hon. Member a well founded one, but not a bona fide question of privilege?

**Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, this is the second time in a couple of weeks that the deliberations of an *in camera* meeting have been discussed as point of privilege on the floor.

With specific reference to the point raised by House Leader of the Official Opposition, and his quoting of Beauchesne's, Section 647(2), it seems to me that on a reading of the substance of that citation, that refers to a privilege of the House being breached because of publication of the deliberations of a committee before they got to the floor of the House. What my colleague, the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow) is specifically complaining about is the disclosure of what took place, the deliberations, the proceedings, at an *in camera* meeting.

I go back to what I said on that earlier occasion, committees would not be able to function without the ability to hold *in camera* meetings, to have the give and take which one requires from time to time in this business—in any business, at any level, in fact—away from, and I do not even have to read Beauchesne, the glare of publicity. I think that is what my hon. friend is driving at when she says her privileges as a member of that committee have been breached, and her ability to do her job as a member and chairman of that committee is being derogated by the fact that on this occasion the deliberations of that committee, the proceedings—not the committee report, *per se*—were disclosed. I respectfully suggest that the final report would be eventually tabled in the House, in any event.

I do not have an awful lot of trouble as to whether or not the media might receive it a half hour before the House. However, I have a great deal of difficulty with the problem the Hon. Member had, and the problem brought up two weeks ago, when Members go behind closed doors to discuss and deliberate, and then find that what was discussed *in camera* becomes the property of the media and the public. I do not think this

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helps the House or Hon. Members. I think the Hon. Member made an excellent point as to her question of privilege.

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for clarifying the matter of concern. However, I think it is still sound for me to ask the Chair to consider whether the point I raised is not equally relevant to the fact situation, which is the basis for the complaint of the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow).

Are we faced with a complaint which is so vague as to whom it is directed, particularly with respect to the role of Members of Parliament, that the complaint is not a sound basis for a motion to be voted on by this House to refer the matter to the Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure? Such a motion, and the investigation by a committee which would flow therefrom, is a serious matter, and one which takes place rarely.

While I understand the Hon. Member's concern, especially now that it has been clarified for me by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader, I wonder if it is still not the case, and I would argue that it is, that any motion the Hon. Member for Calgary South would move, if the Speaker found a prima facie case of privilege, would be of such a vague nature it would not be a proper basis for a vote of this House with a resulting inquiry by the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys on the same point?

**Mr. MacLellan:** Mr. Speaker, there was just one thing which concerned me and I think it has been made clear by the House Leader of our Party, so I am prepared to let the matter stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank Hon. Members for their interventions, all of which are helpful to the Chair. I should advise the House that a week or so ago an application, not exactly the same as this, but similar, was brought before the House by the Hon. Member for Selkirk—Interlake (Mr. Holtmann) with respect to a statement made in this House relating to an *in camera* meeting by the Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River (Mr. Parry). I think I should advise Hon. Members that that matter has given the Chair a great deal of difficulty. However, the Chair will be ruling on that matter tomorrow.

With respect to the matter I have heard today, I will be giving it very careful consideration. I can indicate to Hon. Members that there have been enough of these cases now that the Chair feels duty bound to Hon. Members to take the matter very seriously, indeed, and I will be returning to the Chamber tomorrow with a ruling.