

Routine Proceedings

Look at today's polls, Mr. Speaker—I won't read them to you, modesty forbids—but we represent a substantial share of the Quebec population. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, I hope and trust you will give us an answer as soon as possible. Whatever your decision we are at least entitled to a reply.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I will take into consideration what the hon. member has said. It may well be that an answer has been sent and the hon. member may not have received it. I will look into it and report back to the hon. member.

The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond on a point of order.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, perhaps it might be best to choose another location to discuss this with you, such as your chambers, but I would like to raise this matter with you.

On November 1, 1990 the hon. member for Abitibi under Statements by Members made reference to my colleague from Burin—St. George's in terms of his travel expenses which the Chair allowed to proceed in its entirety.

On November 8, the member for Scarborough—Agin-court made certain references to subject matter which he believed to be important. He was thereafter called to order by the Chair.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, on November 19, my colleague from Burin—St. George's made some remarks with regard to the different positions being taken by the New Democratic Party in the province of Newfoundland, as well as on the floor of the House of Commons. I believe at that time the Chair stood in its place and again directed certain comments to that particular member. I, as well as other members on this side would like to have the opportunity of perhaps visiting your chambers in order to discuss both the process and indeed, the substance of what appeared at first hand, to be different treatments, if you will, being given to different members of Parliament from different political parties. I am sure this Speaker would at least entertain me in his chamber in order to make those particular points.

• (1510)

Mr. Speaker: I would like to assure the hon. member that the Chair, as much as is humanly possible, would not ever treat one hon. member differently than the others.

A few days ago I said to the hon. member for Scarborough—Agin-court that it may well have been that something slipped by my careful consideration. That is not satisfactory, but perhaps that is what happened. With respect to the hon. member for Burin—St. George's, I would be very pleased to go over the transcript. I might also ask the hon. member to give me in full what it was he intended to say.

We will try to keep within the bounds of the prescription of Madam Sauvé of some years ago, in that Statements by Members are not supposed to make a personal attack on a member. I recognize that that gets a little difficult sometimes, especially when what is being attacked is a political position taken by the member.

Madam Sauvé also commented on the fact that congratulations are really not the purpose of members' statements. I received a note today from one hon. member who is very diligent on these matters, pointing out that it may not have been appropriate to offer congratulations to the Winnipeg team. I felt constrained, despite the fact that there have been comments by past Speakers, I was not sure that to restrain hon. members in congratulating the winner of the Grey Cup would make any friends in the Chamber at all.

However, it is a difficult line sometimes to find. It is doubly difficult because the Chair cannot always be sure of exactly where the statement is going. If it is giving members trouble and difficulties, I would be very pleased to discuss it and to see if we can straighten it out. It is not my purpose to leave even an impression that one member is getting treatment that is not available to another member.

I would ask all hon. members because it is an important matter, to be very careful in giving members' statements. If it is strictly a comment upon a political position, that is one thing. If it passes over that and becomes a personal attack, then we have tried to stay away from that sort of thing.