

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member will know that he is in fact disputing an opinion of another Hon. Member. It would be very difficult for the opinion of another Hon. Member of this House to constitute the basis of a Question of Privilege.

REASON FOR DENIAL BY MR. SPEAKER OF SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, as in all situations, I certainly will abide by your rulings, whatever they may be and however one may feel at the end of the day. But I guess I rise to ask you—and I ask this sincerely—as the Speaker elected by all Hon. Members of Parliament, if you would, for me and for my caucus colleagues, explain why you ruled out of order questions I had posed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) regarding the conduct and behaviour of a certain Minister within the Government, which we believe reflects, rightly or wrongly—allow me to conclude—on the integrity and the ability of that particular Minister to carry on his responsibilities—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order.

Mr. Dingwall: —in view of the guidelines which have been set down by the Prime Minister—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order.

Mr. Dingwall: —in view of the comments and statements made by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order.

Mr. Dingwall: Could you comment on that?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member is in fact making a speech.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member is verging on making a speech. He knows that is why I was trying to get him to be brief. In order to be as clear as I possibly can, perhaps I will just quote Standing Order 40:

No Member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the Royal Family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any Member thereof. No Member may reflect upon any vote of the House,—

In other words, the Hon. Member may wish to ask the question which was asked with regard to the confidence of the Prime Minister in another Minister. That question was asked by Hon. Members. But in asking that question, no aspersions may be cast upon the character of the Minister involved. If the Hon. Member believes he wishes to do something further along that line, I think he knows our historical practices with regard to the tabling of motions.

The Hon. Member sought clarification, and that is all I can give him.

Mr. Dingwall: I understand your desire, Mr. Speaker, and the expediency with which you want to deal with all these

Point of Order—Mr. de Corneille

matters of points of order and questions of privilege, but I ask you, respectfully, after reading that particular rule—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order.

Mr. Dingwall: —that you have just read, would you be prepared to review my question and indicate to me the offensive language which was used, specifically, in accordance with that particular rule? I wonder if you would be kind enough to do that because, as you have now stated it, I find your ruling to be more confusing than the first.

● (1520)

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Lewis: Reflection on the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member knows he is making a reflection on the Chair and I am sure he will want to withdraw it. However, I am not going to pursue that right now.

I would be happy to check the “blues”. As the Hon. Member will know, I do not have written questions in front of me, I only have what I hear. What I heard was the Hon. Member making an assertion that the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) had at one point bugged the Liberal caucus. That is precisely what I heard in his preamble. I take that as an aspersion on character. Therefore I asked the Hon. Member to withdraw.

Order, please. Let me make it as clear as I can because I have a feeling we are going to go through this again. If the Hon. Member wants to make an accusation regarding the character of another Member, it is improper to do that through a preamble to a question. In our practices it is only proper to do that through a specific charge in a substantive motion laid on the Table.

Mr. de Corneille: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Anyone who wishes to make further representations with regard to these matters knows the proper route is to do it in Chambers or outside the House.

Order, please. I have yet to hear a point of order. Is the Hon. Member rising on a different point of order? Then the Hon. Member will resume his seat, please. He will not keep getting up on the same point of order.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CAUCUS MEETINGS—ASSURANCES SOUGHT FROM MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to kindly tell us whether you will, in light of these rather disturbing threats to the environment of this House of Commons—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order. What disturbances to the environment of this House?

Mr. de Corneille: —indicate what you can do and intend to do to bring some kind of assurance to us as to—