

Privilege—Mr. Lawrence

member has taken to heart the advice the Speaker gave by saying, leave that part of the argument alone, it has been settled.

Mr. Broadbent: With all due respect to the Deputy Prime Minister, I am not challenging or questioning the Speaker's judgment. I am commenting on the logic of the government's position. Whether the Deputy Prime Minister wants to put it that way or not, it is indeed questioning the Speaker's ruling. When the Speaker says there is a *prima facie* case, that is his ruling.

Mr. MacEachen: Absolutely.

Mr. Broadbent: Before we had this government, the traditional practice of the House was to deal with such a ruling in a perfunctory way, instead of debating it and having the House perform as a committee. The Speaker surely knew, although I obviously did not discuss it with him, the normal procedure would be for a government which respects the Chair to respect that decision and have it referred to the committee.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I am not saying the government is not showing respect for the Chair. I am saying that the government ought to let this go to the committee so it can do its proper job and, after it makes its recommendation, let the members of this House, then, and only then, make the final decision.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I wish to intervene briefly in this debate, not from the point of view of an expert on the rules and Standing Orders of this House, nor from the point of view of a great legal mind, because I am neither.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): At least I recognize my own limitations, which is more than some members do. I rise in this debate to put in my own crude words the point of view of the ordinary man on the street who must be confused by this debate. I am an ordinary person who represents the common people, in this House of Commons.

I take offence with the remarks made by the leader of the New Democratic party (Mr. Broadbent), who is more often a clown than an intellect, a quality which he displayed admirably today. The hon. member's remarks with regard to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) were not only wrong, but outrageous. That should be on the record of the proceedings of this House.

The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby stated that the Deputy Prime Minister was challenging the Speaker's ruling. That, of course, is arrant nonsense. He also stated that we who occupy the back benches on this side of the House will do whatever we are told. That, too, is arrant nonsense.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[Mr. MacEachen.]

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): It is nice to hear the guffaws from the other side. Over the years since I have been here, we have been called all kinds of names, such as trained seals. At least we do not flap our flippers.

Mr. Benjamin: Good line!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I am surprised that the main proponent of illogic in this House, the leader of the New Democratic Party, would dare to comment on the logic of the government's case.

In his opening remarks the leader of the NDP referred to the ability of the Deputy Prime Minister to mislead this House. That is an affront to every member of the government party and, in particular, to the Deputy Prime Minister, who is known throughout this country as a man of honesty and integrity. I suggest that the leader of the NDP withdraw that specious remark. It has merit neither in fact nor in logic.

● (1622)

I want to deal with some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay). I did not find them offensive. However, I want to comment on them in the perspective of the man on the street who is not trained in the rules of parliamentary procedure or in the legal arguments of counsel.

The first comment which concerned me was that someone has caused the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) to misinform the House. That is a very serious statement. I am sure the hon. member made it very seriously and without any facetiousness. If that in fact occurred, and that seems to be the crux of the ruling which was made yesterday, it is indeed a matter of grave concern, not only for us here but for all Canadians. If it did occur, there are several questions that arise.

If someone caused the Solicitor General or any minister to misinform this House, who is responsible for this misinformation? Is the Solicitor General personally responsible, is the government collectively responsible, or is the person who misinformed the Solicitor General responsible for this misinformation? From the point of view of common sense, it would seem that the person who misinformed the person who passed on the information is responsible.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party said we cannot call the commissioner of the RCMP before this House. That is nonsense. We can call before the bar of this House anyone we wish to call.

Mr. Orlikow: When did we last do it?

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): It does not matter when we last did it. The fact is we can do it and, if we must, we should. I understand, Mr. Speaker, there is still some space in the Peace Tower.

I do not believe any resolution of this question can be arrived at until all the information is placed before the committee. I agree with the House leader that the best way to get all the information is to await the report or, at least, the