

Privilege—Mr. Jourdenais

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I think there are two very important facts arising from these events which should be considered in reaching your decision. First of all, the Hon. Member who raised the question of privilege in the House had agreed to this half-a-loaf solution when a consensus was sought. Furthermore, since that time, nearly a month ago, although meanwhile a steering committee has been appointed, two deputy chairmen have been elected, the committee has been sitting regularly twice a week to deal with the complex and important matters submitted for consideration, I have received no request, either verbally or in writing, for retaining the services of a researcher on an individual basis.

Since then, a consultant was hired by the committee. I am referring to Mr. Jos Maingot of the Law Reform Commission, a former member of the legal team of the Speaker of the House of Commons. This consultant, whose integrity, competence and experience were immediately recognized by all members of our committee, is now working with the chairman and the clerk of the committee in order to hasten the results of this investigation to meet an even tighter deadline.

Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to breach the rights and privileges of a committee member or any Member of this House. I therefore respectfully seek your decision on this matter, and I assure you of my unqualified respect for the elementary principles of natural justice. I am not a lawyer but merely an engineer who wants to be reasonable and find ways to settle differences and reach a consensus among all members of my committee.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, since two questions of privilege were before the House, we decided to cancel the committee's regular meeting until you reached a decision. Without wishing to hurry the Chair, we would appreciate it very much if you would give us your decision on these two questions as soon as possible.

● (1140)

[English]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I will not take any time to speak on the second point that was raised because I think other Members who were present at the meeting are far more able to do that.

However, in relation to the first point, I would ask you to review *Hansard* or the "blues" later. I believe you will note there that the Member in question alleged that another Member raised a question of privilege, the motivation for which he attributed to vengeance. I think that such a reference is definitely against the rules of the House. One cannot attribute such motives to another Member whether it is in debate, in reference to a question of privilege, or anything else.

I would ask you to review that. While I am not the Member who was attacked by that statement, I feel that all parliamentarians are affected if that kind of remark is allowed to be made without being responded to.

Mr. Speaker: I have the Hon. Member's point and I will consider it. I might point out that this ought to be a procedural argument, and comments are sometimes made in these arguments which go beyond procedural points. They are of very little help to the Chair and create other difficulties, because other Members rise and exercise their undoubted right to comment on them. If they are out of order, it just gives the Chair another matter to deal with.

However, I am very conscious of the strong feelings that have been exercised in this matter. It would be helpful to the Chair that any comments that Hon. Members make in assistance to the Chair in this matter be kept on the procedural points.

The Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) has been able to join us. He may not have been able to hear all of the intervention of the Hon. Member for LaSalle (Mr. Lanthier).

Out of courtesy to the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), he may want to consider the remarks in *Hansard* before making any further comment. If that would be of assistance to the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt, I will adjourn this matter for a sufficient time for him to be able to examine the remarks of the Hon. Member for LaSalle.

I would say the same thing to the Hon. Member for La Prairie (Mr. Jourdenais). It might expedite the matter. However, if the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt is seeking the floor, I will hear him briefly at this point.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into a discussion on the question of privilege. However, I must say that I find it passing strange that we were scheduled to have a standing committee meeting at 9.30. We invited witnesses—

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the Hon. Member's co-operation. I understand that the meeting was cancelled. I have seen the notice. A reason has been given. It is not for me to say whether the reason is adequate or inadequate.

However, we have a serious question of privilege before us on which the Hon. Member has spoken. I would ask Hon. Members not to get into something else until we at least have a chance to settle this.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into it. But I want to say that I am not prepared now to respond to the points that the Hon. Member for LaSalle (Mr. Lanthier) has made. First, if I had known that it was going to be dealt with at 9.30—and I am sure there are other members from the committee who would have wanted to be here to deal with it—then I would certainly have done so.