

Privilege

from members of a party which relies on non-elected senators to bring Parliament to a standstill.

My point is very clear, Mr. Speaker: false statements have been made yesterday and I am asking the hon. member for York South—Weston to withdraw his words. That is a specific point and a clear request.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I will heed your advice and be brief. We live in a free and democratic country. We are proud of our political system where elected members enjoy freedom of speech to promote the interests of their constituents, and I would suggest that all members share that sentiment. This is why it is so saddening to realize that good though our system may be it does have weak points. For it has become clear in recent days that some members take advantage of democratic freedoms to discredit democracy in this House. As members from Quebec we left our parties to be free to defend the interests of the people of Quebec. Entertain no illusions, we have their support. The democratic process in Laurier—Sainte-Marie is proof positive of that fact. We got two thirds of the votes. A clear-cut victory. It also goes to show that we members of the Bloc Québécois promote and respect democracy.

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, the attitude and remarks of the hon. member for Burin—St. George's yesterday are totally unacceptable. It is unacceptable that a member with his experience would dare say, and I quote: "I will vote for a motion any day at all that runs this crowd clean out of this place once and for good. I will go for that motion because—"

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to show more respect for our parliamentary democracy and to withdraw his remarks.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I could hear the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands just briefly and then I will come back to the other hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Standing Orders are clear: whoever wishes to rise on a question of privilege must do so at the most convenient time. The Hon. Member for Burin—St. George made this statement yesterday during debate. Hon. Members were here and they could have risen during debate, but they failed

to do so. Therefore, I suggest that what the Hon. Member is doing is irregular and out of order.

• (1530)

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I must say that I received all these notices in writing this morning. In the past there has been a general sense that a matter that is to be raised is sometimes raised after it is possible to see the "blues". In any event, I suppose the hon. member is partially right in a very narrow sense, but I have accepted them and I am trying as best I can to dispose of the matter without taking up too much time of the House.

I am saying to the hon. member for Longueuil that he is beginning to go beyond the question of privilege. Sooner or later someone is going to complain about that. I would ask him to bring his remarks to a close and would give him a few more minutes to do so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I want only to repeat that I am asking the Hon. Member for Burin—St. George to withdraw the remarks he made concerning the Bloc Québécois. I do so, not only on behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, but also of all the Members of this House.

It is a matter of principle; no member of this House should be allowed to comment on the right of another member to sit in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with your suggestion, you wanted to receive direction or, if you will, suggestions from hon. members in helping you to make your adjudication.

Of course you are aware of Beauchesne's paragraph 24, which is a definition of a point of privilege, paragraph 26 and of course paragraph 31 of Beauchesne's.

I wish to point out a number of facts which I believe are quite pertinent to the issue at hand. The first is that the hon. member for Shefford quite rightly made reference to a great Nova Scotian in the person of Joe Howe, who was elected to the House of Commons and had a particular view on Canadian society whereby he led a movement, an anti-confederate movement in this partic-