

Privilege—Mr. Nielsen

Speaker—even if those Members over there do not know it—must be regarded as private and personal in light of the customs and traditions of this place. As far as I am concerned they are sacred as long as they are occupied by the Hon. Member occupying them at the moment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: The offices of the Leader of the Opposition fall within that category just as the offices of any Hon. Members of this House. The offices which are currently occupied by me as Leader of the Opposition were formerly occupied by a number of very distinguished Canadians.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Hon. Member might have a grievance, but he must demonstrate to me very quickly how this affects his privilege. "Privilege" has a definition which the Hon. Member knows just as well as I do, and he cannot use a question of privilege in order to pursue a debate. Therefore, I warn him—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: When will you find one?

Madam Speaker: I do not know what this House has come to. I am only trying to be a Speaker.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, like you, I do not know what this House has come to when Hon. Members cannot rest secure in the thought that their offices are not going to be broken into.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, the breaking and entering of an Hon. Member's office without his knowledge or the knowledge of any of his staff, and without any request to enter those offices from that Hon. Member or the members of his staff, surely must constitute a question of privilege, just as it did a while back in the case of the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) when the Chair listened to that question of privilege when it was raised. If the Chair finds that I have a prima facie case of privilege, I will be moving an appropriate motion to refer the circumstances to the appropriate committee of the House.

The memorabilia in this place are part and parcel of the history of this country.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I do not know what the Hon. Member is coming to, but I can see from the first sentence of his intervention that he wants to complain about the fact that his office has been broken into. This does not fall under the purview of a question of privilege. I can assure—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker:—the Hon. Member that the whole matter will be investigated and I am sure that the Hon. Member will find satisfaction in the investigation which we run. We will

investigate the matter fully. However, that is not a question of privilege.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Absolutely not.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, since when—

Mr. Pinard: Order. No questions of the Speaker.

Mr. Nielsen: The Government House Leader is now the Speaker of this place. Since when, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Cosgrove: Let's have some respect for the House.

Mr. Nielsen: Since when, Madam Speaker, is the offence of break and enter, which is an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada, not a question of privilege? My offices have been broken into. There has been a trespass by the employees of the Minister of Public Works. That office has been defaced without my request, my permission, my authority and without my knowledge. Surely, in keeping with the precedent established by the Chair in the case of the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) when her office was broken into, this must constitute a question of privilege. If the Speaker is telling me no, it does not, then no one in this place can rest secure that the premises which constitute their offices are not subject to the same kind of violation at any time by anyone.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: What I was advancing to the Chair is proof of the fact that they were broken into. They were broken into because those carvings above the doors in my boardroom were mutilated, defaced, removed. That, Madam Speaker, must surely constitute a question of privilege. If you find it does not, if you were to tell me, Madam Speaker, that it was done by your authority, that might constitute a different matter. I would have, of course, expected to have been consulted before any such authorization was made by the Chair, if in fact it was, but that would at least provide me with an explanation, which has not been advanced by the Minister of Public Works.

The sanctity of an Hon. Member's office must be regarded as just that, and I submit, as in the case of the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands, that an intrusion must constitute a question of privilege. If you so find, Madam Speaker, I would intend to move that the circumstances surrounding the trespassing, the break and entry, the invasion of my offices as a Member of Parliament, now the Leader of the Opposition, be referred to the appropriate standing committee of this House so that all of the circumstances can be investigated and a report made to you and to other Hon. Members of this House, who then might feel secure that their offices will not be invaded in a similar fashion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!