

Privilege

As to the representation whether the Prime Minister would call up a citizen to criticize the comments that he made in respect to this most important and vital issue, I would really question whether it is an appropriate submission or representation to be made in Question Period.

I would hope the House would allow the Speaker to follow his suggestion, that he be allowed to look at the "blues" to see whether it is an appropriate question for Question Period. In the meantime, I would not like the record to indicate in any way, shape or form that this government has identified itself with those comments, that Mr. John Crispo is speaking for the government or even the CBC. He was a citizen expressing a point of view, a point of view with which I do not agree if the quote is accurate. I am not suggesting that it is not, but sometime quotes are not fulsome in giving the full views of individuals.

It is not the position of this government or of any minister of this government. If there is a dispute with Mr. Crispo it should be handled by way of private conversations between the hon. member and Mr. Crispo, who is a private citizen and not a member of the government or someone for whom the government is responsible.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say that Mr. Crispo is no ordinary citizen. Mr. Crispo is sitting in a most important place at this time in our country. The statement he made is the kind of statement that got the hon. minister who just spoke in trouble with another party in his province.

Surely someone in this House should at least stand up and say what we think of his views, not privately. I personally feel insulted and I will tell you why. These statements are unacceptable. This country is going through a crisis and here is a man who is repeating exactly what is being said in Alberta. That code word. That is exactly what it going on in western Canada because I go there. These are the code words that are well understood by some people who say French is being shoved down their throats.

This is a very important question. Mr. Speaker, you were so concerned about the future of this country that you made a speech about your concern. We cannot allow

these kinds of statements which are inflammatory and only confirm what individual people may think.

I have never said, as my colleague has said, that 77 per cent of senior public servants are anglophones, whatever anglophone may mean. I have never said how many unilingual French speaking people there are in the 23 per cent left. I could go across the country and say in French: There is not a single unilingual Canadian in the federal hierarchy who speaks French, there is not a single one.

[*English*]

We know there are none. I submit to this House that you will take that under your usual cool consideration and come back because we need an answer. We need an answer because we could talk for hours and ask what percentage of the people work in Agriculture Canada. How many people are working in Energy Canada? If *le Commissaire aux langues officielles* says 75 per cent, of course it is disastrous for English Canadians. It is terrible, but you have to express yourself in both languages if you want to work in the official languages office. To choose this one and excite people who are easily excitable these days is not in the good interest of Canada.

I think it was a genuine question from someone, somewhere, and you are the highest authority for the House. You will tell us the kind of rule we can use because we would like to know who will deliver that message. It will not be done in a private chitchat saying "Little naughty boy, you should not have said that. I hope next time you will act and behave better". We are not going to be satisfied with that. I am not going to be satisfied with that.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Yes, Mr. Speaker, while you are reflecting on the question of privilege raised by my colleague, and I certainly want to take an opportunity to check the record and review it very carefully, I do want to say something in support of the points which have been raised. The government House leader has alluded to the fact that the comments in question were made by a private citizen.

Not only is the member a private citizen, he is well beyond that. He occupies a position of some seniority in a very major and important Crown corporation in this country. He exercises responsibilities of both an adminis-