

Privilege—Mr. Hnatyshyn

I cannot decide a question of privilege based on a hypothetical situation. The hon. member's privilege must have been breached—right now—and I want him to tell me how. I think the hon. member is pointing to something which is becoming increasingly clear. The Chair cannot be put in a position indefinitely to hear questions of privilege which are not really questions of privilege. The credibility of the Chair and hon. members is involved, and I will preserve that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, I take this matter very seriously; as you do, I appreciate. The point is that there is a very serious intrusion on and interference with the rights of every member of this House of Commons. There is no speculation; there is no hypothesis; I refer to the words from the mouth of the Prime Minister who sits across the aisle from me. By his own admission he intends to hold the address in his hip pocket. That is not hypothetical. He has said that is what he will do. He will step between the two parliaments. He has indicated his intention. He has gone to the United Kingdom on a number of occasions—

Madam Speaker: Order. The point I made to the hon. member is the following: the Right Hon. Prime Minister does not have an address at this point in time in his hip pocket. That has to be quite clear and it cannot be debated as the basis for a question of privilege. The Prime Minister has no address and no resolution. He has nothing.

Mr. Blackburn: Recognize someone else.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, I want to refer, if I might, to Erskine May at page 115 with respect to the whole question of the position of the House of Commons on any resolution or motion passed by the House of Commons. I will read the last sentence on page 115. I am referring to a request of the House through the Speaker with respect to decisions made by the House in which the Speaker is, in effect, deferential to Her Majesty. The sentence reads as follows:

But now the request is little more than formal courtesy; as the proceedings of the House are guarded against any interference, on the part of the Crown, not authorized by the laws and constitution of the country; and as by the law and custom of Parliament the Queen cannot take notice of anything said or done in the House, but by the report of the House itself.

I am not by any means saying that our privileges are impinged upon if we pass this resolution. The Prime Minister has stood in this House. I must accept his word as to what he intends to do. I read the resolution. The Prime Minister tells the House of Commons very seriously what his intention is; he is going to delay.

Mr. Fleming: That is hypothetical.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: He has referred in this House to the fact that he is going to do that.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, may I have order in this House? There is a systematic attempt on the part of the government to prevent us from bringing matters before this House. The Prime Minister has not hypothecated. He has said what he intends to do, that is not hypothecation.

The point I make is that there is adequate authority for this proposition. The Prime Minister is infringing on our rights. He is intimidating members of this House of Commons by his actions. He has no authority to threaten us with holding back a resolution. He tells us, on the one hand, that we are to pass this particular resolution, and then he says that once the resolution of this Parliament has been passed, he will interfere. I say that that threat is an intimidation.

Your Honour will be aware of the fact, having read the proposed resolution, that there is no provision by which there can be any delay. There is no provision authorizing or vesting in the Prime Minister to step between the two parliaments and to tell the United Kingdom parliament to delay passage. Yet if I may be permitted to say so, that threat is now on the floor of the House of Commons.

I would like to call it five o'clock, Madam Speaker.

● (1700)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[Translation]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Madam Speaker: Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Hudecki)—The Constitution—Effect of charter of rights on abortion provisions in Criminal Code; the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster)—Health care—Extra billing by doctors—Co-operation of Ontario in banning practice; the hon. member for Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands (Mr. Manly)—Combines—Recommendation to prohibit ownership of pipelines by oil companies.

[English]

Mr. Knowles: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. May I ask whether the House would be prepared to give me unanimous consent to table a petition?

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to table a petition?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Knowles: Madam Speaker, it is a petition from Saskatchewan senior citizens.