

Privilege—Hon. J. Reid

[English]

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order—

Madam Speaker: I have heard the Hon. Member on his question of privilege. Perhaps we should end the debate there and I will look at the different submissions and rule later.

HON. J. REID—ENTRANCE TO HOUSE IMPEDED

Hon. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River): Madam Speaker, I gave you notice of my question of privilege yesterday. It is based on the fact that since my return to Ottawa after the summer I have been stopped three times from entering the House of Commons. I must admit I have not been absolutely prevented from entering the House of Commons, but I have found my entrance into the House of Commons impeded. I understand as well that Your Honour has had discussions with the Members of the Management and Members' Services Committee and I understand that the Whips have gone to all the parties to seek some general consensus in terms of imposing upon ourselves new restrictions in respect of the security of Members of the House of Commons. In general I have no problem with that and in general I am sympathetic to the position Your Honour found yourself in when you were informed of the dangers that apparently were involved.

My question of privilege is on the basis that while a general consensus has emerged and while there has been some specific discussion with the Management and Members' Services Committee, the stories going around are that there are to be far more restrictions placed upon the ability of Members of the House and their staffs to move around the building.

I understand the dilemma that Your Honour has since the House Leader has not seen fit to set up the Committee on Procedure and Organization which has traditionally looked into this kind of matter. I was a member of that committee in 1971 when we looked into the Chartier case. For Members who do not remember, that individual wired himself up as a bomb and blew himself up in one of the washrooms near the Prime Minister's office. The second time, of course, was in 1975 when the Procedure and Organization Committee looked into the question of security again.

I do not want to proceed with a formal motion on my question of privilege for two reasons. First of all, the people affected would be the constables who were trying to follow the directions of their superiors. I think it would be unfortunate, when they were simply trying to obey instructions from their superiors, if they were to go through the kind of process we would have to put them through.

If we are going to impose restrictions upon ourselves as Members of Parliament, I think the Speaker should have the advice and assistance of a standing committee of some sort. As Hon. Members know, and as I am sure you will understand, Madam Speaker, what is going to happen is going to be fairly controversial.

I make an appeal to the House Leader and to the Leaders of the other parties to make some arrangement to provide this kind of help and assistance to the Speaker. I know that not many of us wear the pins and the identification that we have

been given. In my own case I wear no wedding ring and no other kind of jewellery. I have no identification that proves I am a Member of Parliament. I have never required any identification to prove that I was a Member of Parliament until this September. If we are going through this process, then I think there ought to be a wide-ranging set of discussions within the House of Commons.

As I say, Madam Speaker, I understand the difficulty you are in. I am fully in sympathy with the decisions you felt you had to take and I am prepared to support them. I would make an appeal to the House itself and to Members to take much more interest in what is going on.

Madam Speaker: I was just going to interrupt the Hon. Member. Of course, I cannot be asked to rule on a hypothetical situation where the Hon. Member is saying that in the future some more stringent security measures might be imposed upon Members. I can assure him that there has been no discussion at the present time of any more stringent measures being imposed upon Members. I can assure him that there has been no discussion at the present time of any more stringent measures being imposed upon Members except the ones that have been agreed to by the different caucuses. The Hon. Member is raising a question of privilege based on some rumour that has circulated around the Hill. He has been here long enough to know that there are a lot of rumours circulated around the Hill and that it is not always a good idea to give credence to those rumours.

Security measures have now been put in place. There is one more that will be put in place later which has been agreed upon by all caucuses after intensive consultation with the Whips, the Whips having brought the problem to the caucuses which have discussed it. This is, of course, an administrative matter that I could probably have decided upon myself but I would not have wanted to deprive myself of the wisdom of all Members in the House in this very delicate matter.

Members should understand that I get informed of certain incidents which, in the time that I have been here, have given me and others cause to worry. We have had to come to the conclusion that certain of these measures were necessary. They are as repugnant to me as they are to many Hon. Members, but I ask the House to co-operate in the implementation of these measures.

● (1540)

I would like the Hon. Member to wear his pin if he could, but it is not necessary for Members of Parliament who do not like to wear jewellery. The guards have been trained to recognize all Members. If the Hon. Member has been stopped at the door, I am sorry for that, but it must be one of the exceptions. That it should happen to him three times in a row is very unlucky for the Hon. Member, but I think we all realize that Parliament must be open to everyone. That remains a very, very important principle, but some kind of security measure had to be put in place in order to protect us from people who,