

It was my thought that because of this rule, because of the procedural difficulties, there was considerable provocation, and I can understand why the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate felt it necessary at the time to use what in my estimation in any event were rather strong words. That is why I sought his co-operation and assistance to the Chair. But I felt at the same time, and I repeat this, that we should try to solve the other situation at the same time. I do not agree with the suggestion that these are two entirely different problems. This is one and the same problem, and I would hope that the efforts of members of the House to try to resolve the procedural matter which has caused so much difficulty in past months, indeed, in past years, would be supported by every single member, including the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate.

I would hope, very sincerely and very deeply, that the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate will look at this matter in the same way as I do and confirm the suggestion I am making to him which I have made before that the words used were unparliamentary and that there might be ways of saying what we want to say by using words that are acceptable and in the traditions of the House. It is in accordance with this line of thinking that I seek again the co-operation of the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate.

● (1420)

Mr. Lundrigan: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to say that the motion by the House leader of this party and the response by the other three House leaders come as a bit of a pleasant surprise to me, although I was aware of the motion for the last 15 or 20 minutes immediately before the House opened. I also want to say that this was not done as a result of pressure on my part directed toward Your Honour or to any of the House leaders. It arises out of something that happened earlier in the week and is a mutual effort on the part of hon. members, and I suspect on the part of Your Honour, to have the matter properly dealt with.

Second, what started out as Canada's mini cod war has developed into something much more fundamental and complex. For some time I have felt strongly that when statements are made outside the House, members should be able to deal with them in some way in the House of Commons that would enable the House to express itself upon them and to impose some kind of political morality on all hon. members. The people of Canada should be able to demand of their parliamentary representatives at the national level, not only members of the Privy Council but all representatives, the highest degree of integrity and the highest degree of frankness and openness possible under our parliamentary system. This was the basis on which the question was raised earlier in the week.

I also feel that while the rule preventing members of the House from responding to statements made outside the House might very well have been applicable 100 years ago, today we are living in an age in which, with instant communication, sometimes what is said outside the House becomes more important than what is said inside the House. That, I feel, leads to a degradation of our parliamentary system. As a young Member of Parliament, relatively speaking, compared with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I feel this is some-

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thing we should all examine in the hope of upgrading it and bringing it into proper perspective in the twentieth century.

The other point I want to make is that I have the greatest respect for Your Honour and the deepest admiration. Without sounding condescending by saying under these circumstances what you might expect me to say, I feel it is impossible for this House of Commons ever to expect to obtain anybody else to preside over events in the House with more capability, stature and dignity than Your Honour possesses. I believe every member of the House will agree with that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lundrigan: At the same time, I feel that nothing comes easy. To experience anguish and a little broken rest, which not only Your Honour may have suffered during the last few days, may sometimes be necessary in order to bring certain matters to the fore and have them properly dealt with. I do not see how we are going to get reform unless members are willing, within the rules, to stand up and sometimes even take issue with those rules to have matters reformed and brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Frequently during the question period, and now with respect to this particular rule, I find myself in a position that I do not enjoy. Some people enjoy a comfortable pew. I enjoy a comfortable pew too, but sometimes we have to put this kind of comfort behind us and be willing to stand up for things which, in the future, will be of the greatest importance for our Canadian parliamentary system.

I feel that what has happened today will go down in Canadian parliamentary history as an important event, if the procedure committee deals with it as I know they will deal with it. Consequently, I believe I would be cutting off my nose to spite my face if I were not willing, in deference to the House, to make a compromise. In saying this I am not retracting in any way from the substance and essence of the statement I made in the House on Tuesday. In fact, I hope to be able to appear before the committee. With reference to the specific words that are not acceptable within the rules we now have and perhaps may always have, out of respect for you, Mr. Speaker, and the House may I say that the recommendation Your Honour has made is quite acceptable to me.

I reiterate that I have a great deal of respect for all members of the Privy Council who have very heavy responsibilities, but I will never condone any member of the House not being completely honest in the representations he makes to the Canadian people. I do not view my retraction, as has been said by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), as prejudicing any future moves I would like to make.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. President of the Privy Council.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, there is a very important point I want to stress in the simplest possible words. The acquiescence of myself and others on this side of the House to this suggestion is strictly on procedural grounds and is not put forward in any way as a conditional offer to any member to observe the rules of privilege. I believe that ought to be understood clearly.