

Privilege—Mr. Olivier

We hope that the government will pay attention to these petitions and might rescind the order forcing metric on a nation that does not want it.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. OLIVIER—INCIDENT OF MARCH 31, 1982

Mr. Jacques Olivier (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege which I feel is extremely important and, in fact, there is a second question of privilege connected with the first one. That is why I accepted your ruling last week, in which you mentioned I had failed to send notice. Furthermore, I wish to make it clear that I did send notice the same day you pointed this out to me, and I trust that in that respect, I have acted in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House.

I have found, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Do I understand correctly that the hon. member now has two questions of privilege to discuss? I have only received notice for one question of privilege. If there is a second one, I am very sorry, but the same procedure must be followed. Unless this question arises out of proceedings in the House, the hon. member may not discuss it, but I should be happy to listen to what he has to say about the first question.

Mr. Olivier: Madam Speaker, I would like to say that the first question has been expanded so there is now only one question. So, in that respect, I have met your request. I should like to point out, and I want to make this quite clear, that the Speaker's role in the House is a very difficult one, and it is certainly not up to me to dictate the behaviour of anyone, even the Chair, and certainly not to make any kind of judgment on the qualifications of the members in this House.

Madam Speaker, on March 31, around 5.40 p.m. or 5.45 p.m., the member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker), who had the floor, and several government and opposition members, I believe, tried to raise points of order or questions of privilege to draw your attention and be recognized. I must point out, Madam Speaker, that on page 16031 of *Hansard*, it is clearly established that I tried to draw your attention eight times. On pages 16031 and 16032, we see names of the hon. members who witnessed my attempts to draw your attention eight times, Madam Speaker. I realize that I am a backbencher and I have been one for ten years in this House, but after all, it would have been only fair and reasonable to recognize me between my first and eighth attempt.

At my second attempt to draw your attention, Madam Speaker, you rose and said, and I quote:

Order, please. There can be no point of order. The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton has not yet spoken. He has the floor.

In my view, you had, in fact, ruled on the alleged point of order or question of privilege I had raised. Furthermore, you—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I must interrupt the hon. member at this point. I remember clearly pointing out to the hon. member that I could not allow points of order at the time because I had just given the floor again to the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker)—who had not yet uttered a single sentence, if I remember correctly—and that consequently, there could be no point of order on what the member for Nepean-Carleton had just said because he had not said anything. I must point out to the hon. member that if he would like to recall the circumstances in the House at the time, there were perhaps as many as fifteen members who were trying to be recognized by the Chair, and I could not, of course, recognize everyone at the same time. I tried to give each member a chance to speak, and the hon. member is not satisfied with the manner in which I finally was able to give him the floor. I am very sorry, but I do not feel that this is a matter for a question of privilege. The hon. member for Longueuil.

● (1530)

Mr. Olivier: I am sorry, Madam Speaker, I did not want to doubt your word, but I just wanted to point out that at page 16030, the member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) had already started to speak. I would also like to remind you, Madam Speaker, that one of the privileges and perhaps the only privilege a member has in the House is the right to speak. And it is clear that the purpose of all privileges arising from that single privilege is to enable a member to express his views. It is also a fact, Madam Speaker, that it is extremely difficult for the Chair to recognize 282 members at the same time, and I realize this. I also realize, Madam Speaker, that when we consider the sixth time I tried to get your attention, not the second time as I said earlier but the sixth time, once more, you prejudged the question I wanted to raise, assuming that I wanted to question the hon. member, which was not the case. As page 16031 of *Hansard* indicates, you prejudged what I was going to say.

I should like to point out, Madam Speaker, that Beauchesne's fifth edition mentions the member's privilege of freedom of speech. In Beauchesne, fifth edition, Citation 55 on page 21, it says very clearly, Madam Speaker, that practically the only right a member has in the House is the right to speak. And neither the Chair nor anyone else may judge the hon. member before he has been heard.

Finally, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please! I really have the impression that the hon. member, after sending me notice of his question of privilege which was supposed to refer to the fact that his earphone was not working, is now dealing with an entirely different question. The hon. member has probably realized