

appraisal by the opposite side of a position taken by that particular member.

In the interests of the House, I feel that if we do that we would be extending question period every day by invitation. I am saying to the minister that what he is expressing is a disagreement with the opinion or the description of his position or that of his party; whether it touches him or his party, it is still only a disagreement and not a question of privilege.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. ALLMAND—ALLEGED REFUSAL OF MINISTER TO MEET WITH COPE

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, in answering a question that I put to him today during question period, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Epp) said that he was going to meet with COPE this week. That is not correct. This morning I met with officials of the Committee for Original People's Entitlement, and they told me the minister had refused to meet with them and that he had further instructed his officials not to meet them.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Order. Try the adjournment debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Surely we cannot now get into the situation of a minister or a member misleading the House as to a future event. The minister tells the House that he intends to do something in the future. Surely under privilege we cannot suggest that somebody could get up and make an argument out of that. If I were to allow that, I would have to allow the last intervention by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski).

Mrs. Appoloni: Mr. Speaker, I rise regarding an answer given in this House today to a supplementary question.

With your permission, I would like to be recognized tomorrow on a question of privilege, by which time I will have had a chance to check the records to see exactly what was said.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. GAMBLE—RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege arises out of the practice which has been established and acknowledged by yourself in recognizing speakers in the House during question period, and also the practice that has developed in allowing supplementaries.

It is my view that compliance with Standing Order 5 for all members to attend the service of the House is surely not

Privilege—Mr. Gamble

sufficient. In order to discharge their duties, members of the House must not only be seen but also be heard.

On Thursday last the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) on two separate occasions when commenting upon an approval which had emanated from this side of the House of some comments he had made used the expression "backbencher" in designating certain members of the House, myself included, since I was involved in the commendation of some of his remarks.

I believe that designation carried with it a concept of a lesser or a greater degree of right to participate in proceedings. In the month that I have sat in this House I have recognized that there is most certainly a distinction between those who sit in the front benches and are recognized during question period and those who sit in the rear benches and stand without recognition. I consider that it is absolutely vital for all members in discharging their obligations in this House to be dealt with in a similar manner.

My comments most assuredly are not directed at Your Honour in the exercise of your judgment. I realize that this issue comes close to the issue of the order of the House. However, it is fundamental to my rights as a member in discharging my obligations to my constituents and to breaking down any distinction between those members of this House who may be first class and recognized speedily and those who may be second class and may or may not be recognized at all or at some future or remote time. That is why I draw this matter to the attention of this House.

It cannot be reasonably suggested that because I happen to sit as a member of the government the questions I intend to pose are cream-puff ones for ministers of the Crown. I submit that I am entitled to pose those questions which I believe are urgent, to the same extent as members who pose questions from the other side of the House.

I would urgently request that the issue of recognition be a matter to be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for determination.

Mr. Speaker: Of course, I cannot let this go further. The hon. member gave me notice that he would raise a question of privilege. He will realize at once that he has no question of privilege, and I cannot hear further contributions to a non-question of privilege.

The hon. member will have to realize that the discretion of the Chair is entire in the matter of recognition of members. There is, of course, a fundamental difference, not so much in rank or importance, because all members have equal importance, but in the nature of members who support the government and members who are in opposition to the government when it comes to the functioning of question period. There is a completely different process involved, one of a very fundamental nature, when those who are putting questions are in opposition to the government compared with when those same questions are put by members in support of the government. That has long been recognized, not only by this Parliament but by every Parliament, in terms of their fundamental difference. To suggest that the time during question period ought in any