

Question of Privilege

assure him that I appreciate his kindness and thoughtfulness in giving me notice of the question of privilege which he has raised. I can certainly tell him today that in my view he has given sufficient notice to place the matter before the house. This is one of the requirements which he has met satisfactorily.

There is another requirement about which I am not so sure. I have consulted certain dictionaries for a definition of the word "spurious" and have found the same interpretation as that given by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona; that is "not genuine, not real". I looked at the translation of the word, and perhaps because of my training was impressed by the significance given in the French *Hansard* version of the word used in English by the hon. member. The French *Hansard* reads: "simulacre de motion", an unreal motion or a motion that is not genuine. Obviously this is the interpretation we have to place on that word.

• (2:50 p.m.)

My limited experience in the house indicates that it is not, per se, unparliamentary to say of another member that the statement he makes is false, untrue, wrong, incorrect or even spurious, unless there is an improper motive imputed or unless the member making the charge claims the untruth was stated to the knowledge of the person stating any such alleged untruth.

The minister has taken the opportunity to do what I would have asked him to do in any event, to say that he did not impute motives. The Chair has to be guided by what the minister has stated and by a prima facie interpretation of the word itself. I do not believe that saying a statement made is spurious is unparliamentary, or that a statement is incorrect, wrong or untrue, if no motives are imputed by the person making such a statement. I have to rule with regret—I hope the hon. member is not going to suggest the question should be reopened; I will certainly hear him, but I was going to say that in my opinion there is no prima facie case of privilege.

I might say, in a more general way, that at times there seems to be a misconception about what is a question of privilege and what is a point of order. In many instances the words complained of really should not be complained of on a question of privilege but rather on a point of order, on the basis that the words used are unparliamentary and against the rules and therefore there is a

point of order. I realize that in some instances words may be used which are so strong as to impugn the very honour and integrity of the individual member against whom the words are directed. In this case I do not believe the word is so strong as to impugn the honour of the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona, and for this reason I judge there is no question of privilege.

Mr. Nugent: Your Honour has ruled on the word "spurious", but I had a second matter upon which I would ask for your ruling. Perhaps I did not phrase it quite correctly; nevertheless the total effect of the words referred to must be considered. The difficulty here, sir, is that even sitting in the house, although I objected to some words as they were used, in the heat of debate with the points you are trying to make or to clarify for the minister to be considered, it is not possible to get the general effect of all these remarks or their cumulative effect. I submit therefore it is a proper question of privilege to bring up as soon as possible, as I have done, the entire series of remarks.

I used the word "spurious" as the basis for the first question of privilege because that is the word which caught my attention when I looked at *Hansard* and caused me to check the rest of it. The second point of privilege is based on the entire series of remarks which give the impression—and I believe it is not improper to recognize that the press has so considered these remarks—that the object of this exercise was merely to frustrate the business of the house. Although I objected at the time, these words taken together with the reaction in the press across the country seem to indicate that this was less than a serious charge, that the matter was not serious.

I should like to bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, and the attention of the house, so we may consider exactly how serious the charge is, the evidence which shows that the change was neither minor nor inconsequential because in effect it deprived the committee of complete information on the question of manpower. I think, sir, it must be borne in mind that I rose in my place to take my full responsibility and to make objection.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that since the minister is still sitting in the house with this question hanging over his head, and having turned down the chance last night to have the house give unanimous consent to revert to the question so he could clear his name, Your Honour should take a broad look at the rules in order that members of this house