

Privilege

make it in the midst of this argument. He has put the argument with respect to the publication in cogent terms and that is what I have to decide. If there is another matter that may have to be raised as a consequence of some comment made in the argument, I will hear that at the appropriate time.

Mr. Boudria: There is just one final argument that I want to present to the Chair and to all hon. members on this issue and that is the following: Whether the offence has been committed in this country or anywhere else is not what should concern the House at this point. It may very well be that in the end the parliamentary committee looking into the issue will determine that it is not able to obtain redress, but that is a matter which I do not believe the Speaker should be looking at, with respect, at this point.

I think the Speaker should be concerned with whether or not there is a *prima facie* case of privilege and then an appropriate motion could be moved and the parliamentary committee could obtain information or seek to obtain redress. If it deems that there are appropriate measures, it can decide so at that point.

The Government House Leader did state in his remarks that he believed as well, and I am paraphrasing what he said, that there could be an offence against the privileges of this House but that the offence, I believe he said, was committed outside of the borders of this country. There seems at least to be unanimity on all sides of the House from those remarks, if I am paraphrasing correctly what the minister said, to the effect that there is indeed a *prima facie* case of privilege. I wanted to bring those concluding remarks to the attention of the Chairman and I want to bring the other matter once these deliberations have concluded.

Mr. Speaker: I have listened to hon. members, the Government House Leader, the hon. member for Kamloops, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and I have the material in front of me. I have looked at it and I will look at it again in light of the comments that have been made. It would seem very clear that with respect to our former colleague that it would seem to be at the first opportunity he extended to hon. members an explanation as to his position on that matter. In any

event I will consider the matter carefully and report back to the House as soon as I can.

I have another question of privilege. I think looking at this in the terms of the priorities I will hear the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead.

[Translation]

REMARKS MADE IN HALIFAX BY THE HON. MEMBER FOR YORK SOUTH—WESTON

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, during a Liberal leadership forum held yesterday in Halifax, the hon. member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata) made remarks that were widely reported in Canada,—

Mr. Milliken: He is not here. It should wait.

Mr. Gérin: —slanders Quebecers as a whole, insults and violates the privileges of many members of this House, even though they have not been named. The remarks that were made and reported are that Quebec separatists are traitors to Canada and no better than racists and bigots, that they are therefore guilty of treason, which is perhaps the most serious crime in our Criminal Code. He even had the nerve to name specific Members of this House to illustrate what he had just said.

Mr. Speaker, Quebecers as a whole were shocked by the remarks made by the Hon. Member.

Mr. Saint-Julien: It is disgusting!

Mr. Gérin: To all these Quebecers, it is another insult in the current Constitutional debate.

Mr. Speaker, in 1980, over 40 per cent of Quebecers voted democratically in favor of sovereignty for Quebec and many members of this House also voted yes to the question asked in the referendum. Today that number could be as high or perhaps even much higher.

That debate was extremely democratic. By levelling charges of treason, a crime defined in the Criminal Code as involving violence, the hon. member for York South—Weston and Liberal leadership candidate, attacks certain members of this House and puts them and all of us under a cloud. It is a very serious problem, Mr. Speaker. I know that the hon. member is not here today and that that statement was not made in this House. It is nonetheless an issue and, based on the case law and precedents set in this House, any statement affecting a