

It has already been proven that these questionable allegations simply do not hold water, and in any case, it is a well-known fact that the Department for which I worked very hard as a parliamentary secretary does not report in any way to the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration, which is exclusively concerned with the Department of Employment and Immigration, the Ministry of State (Immigration), the Department of Labour and the Ministry of State (Youth). So even if I had remained parliamentary secretary, I would still be eligible to be elected as chairman of any committee other than the committee dealing with my Department.

As for the gratuitous allegations of lying that were made—all in vain, I can assure you—I do not intend to even consider them at this time.

● (1130)

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if the Hon. Member would withdraw the word "lies". There may be things that were incorrect and things that are absolutely wrong, but I know the Hon. Member would not want to suggest, no matter how wrong or incorrect he may think someone else has been, that they would deliberately lie. I would ask the Hon. Member to set that straight on the record, to withdraw that particular word, and carry on with his explanation, which is very helpful to the Chair.

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw if you understood that I was accusing the other Party of lying. However, what I am saying is that I was accused of lying. I will not comment on that.

Mr. Speaker: I may have misunderstood the Hon. Member and I apologize for that.

[Translation]

Mr. Lanthier: What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is not that my honorable friend has lied, but that he has suggested that I had lied and would not respond to his charges.

Since I feel, as do many other Members of this stately Chamber, that these charges were laid in the heat of an argument on the futility of a childish, if not underhanded or malicious revenge; since the new and complicated business transacted by our important standing committee is obstructed by such futile procedures; since the very substance of the basic principles of the parliamentary reform was strictly adhered to; since the independence of a standing committee must be ensured; since the complete description of the true facts have been presented; and since more of the privileges of any Member of this dignified Chamber has been abused, even indirectly, I respectfully urge you, Mr. Speaker, to rule on this question of privilege at your earliest convenience, in order to restore within the very important Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration, a true climate of healthy co-operation between all its dedicated and very competent members.

Privilege—Mr. Jourdenais

Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like to respond to the question of privilege raised by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez).

Following my election as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration, Mr. Speaker, the committee was immediately asked to consider an important proposal concerning the unreliability of a member of our research team. It was therefore moved and debated that this member of our research team, who is an outside consultant under contract, be fired on the spot.

Following debate, the question on this motion having been put, five Members voted for and five against. As Chairman of the Committee, I refused to cast the deciding vote, because I felt I was not as fully informed as I should to assume the responsibility of this major decision.

Mr. Speaker, one of the main points being discussed was this: Some Members claimed that a researcher should be at the service of the committee in general through its Chairman, while others felt that a researcher under contract could just as well help individual Members carry on their own personal investigation.

Since these two factions of my beloved committee expressed diametrically opposed views, after protracted debate on the question and as committee chairman seeking to achieve a consensus I suggested that an outside consultant be hired to undertake a full inquiry into this matter and submit a report to the committee before year's end. While waiting for the consultant's report, and with a view to respecting as much as possible the rights of all committee members, I also asked that the services of the researcher remain available to individual committee members, after request to, consultation with and approval by the committee chairman.

Unfortunately I was unable to obtain such consensus on this solution which I deemed reasonable, all the more so since it was provisional, temporary and basically respectful of all rights and privileges of members acting in good faith. But a vote was then held on this resolution incorporating the basic points of my consensus proposal; the result was five for and five against, so I exercised my right to cast a vote.

That, Mr. Speaker, was the thrust of the proposal.

[English]

Mr. Warren Allmand moved:

That the Chairman be given the option to engage a consultant, to assist in the evaluation of the Committee's research needs and to report to the Committee by December 31, 1987.

[Translation]

And then there was another proposal:

[English]

Mr. Andrew Witer moved:

That during the course of the evaluation of the Committee's researchers and research needs, no member of the Committee engage any of the researchers without the consent of the Chairman.