

Privilege—Mr. McCleave

I do not know whether it is preferable to do that later in the afternoon or whether it is preferable to do it when *Hansard* is in our hands tomorrow. But if the argument is put forward today, I will have to leave the matter in such a state that I would have an opportunity to examine the language, and I am sure that those who would want to participate on both sides of the question would want the same assistance.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Speaker, neither the House Leader nor anyone else is going to stand up in front of me. I have asked for the blues to be brought down. I will continue to raise the question this afternoon. Since it is now 55 minutes since the language I complained of was used, I hope the page boy will be able to get to the *Hansard* office and bring me down the record. Sir, I intend to persist in this. The words "smuggled in lies" either were used in this House this afternoon, or were not. If I am incorrect in this, then I will have to make the biggest apology I have ever made in my life in this place. That, at least, is not a phrase of such gigantic proportions that even a simpleton like myself would not be able to put it down and think that it was a serious affront to myself and to other people in the House of Commons. The motion that I am going to raise at the end of my speech is:

That this House regards the use of the phrase "smuggled in lies" applied to members of parliament by the Prime Minister at approximately five minutes to three this afternoon as a breach of its privileges and directs that this matter be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections for its deliberations and recommendations.

● (1550)

In support of my motion I refer hon. members to Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, fourth edition, page 98, paragraph 108(1), which reads as follows:

Anything which may be considered a contempt of court by a tribunal, is a breach of privilege if perpetrated against parliament, such as wilful disobedience to, or open disrespect of, the valid rules, orders or process, or the dignity and authority of the House, whether by disorderly, contemptuous, or insolent language, or behaviour, or other disturbing conduct, or by a mere failure to obey its orders.

I make the point that if the country learns tonight on television, by radio or by reading the newspaper that one of the leading people in the House of Commons, namely, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), thinks that it is an acceptable way of life in this chamber to direct lies across the floor, then none of us should have the right to be in this chamber. If that is the way we carry on, then let us forget that there is a parliamentary process; let us forget even that there is a government; let us all clear out of here and let a new crowd take over, because that is how I regard the seriousness of the statement.

We are accused of telling lies, always, from this side to the other side, or perhaps lies come here. I suppose one could reverse that. But this is the language used by the Prime Minister of this country in this chamber. Who does the Prime Minister say has been telling lies? Is it the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark)? Is it the opposition House leader? I see a number of hon. members who are here now, but I will not name them. Who is telling the lies here? The hon. member for

[Mr. Speaker.]

Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) says he never tells lies, and I am sure he does not; but who is telling the lies in this chamber? The Prime Minister shrugs his shoulders and speaks of lies in the House of Commons. If we cannot deal with such a situation and find out who is telling lies or what this is all about, then I say we do not deserve to be parliamentarians or to belong to a parliamentary system.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, without dealing with the question of privilege. The words to which the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) has referred occurred during a question and answer exchange with the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker). These words were audible to the hon. member. In fact, as I recollect, he dismissed them and decided to pursue his question. Then we went on to a question of privilege which had to do with whether or not a minister should have made a statement in the House of Commons.

My point of order is whether, when the incident arose in the hearing of all of us, especially in the hearing of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton, it is appropriate to raise a question of privilege an hour later, because it is my understanding that if a question of privilege is to be validly raised, it must be raised instantly when the event takes place in the House. Perhaps I am mistaken on that, but I must question whether, especially when the hon. member who was engaged in an exchange with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) passed over the point and kept on with his question, it is appropriate now to raise a question of privilege.

I think it is an important ruling. Of course, if Your Honour rules that a question of privilege can be raised at this point, then I would argue on the substance as to whether privilege is involved, because I believe the generality of the statement is such that it cannot be ascribed to any individual, and if I could recount the number of times I have heard such expressions thrown back and forth across the House we would be rising frequently on questions of privilege.

However, I will not argue the substance. I really want to argue whether, with this lapse of time, it is appropriate to raise a question of privilege. I submit that the hon. member lost his opportunity, having permitted the proceedings to continue.

Mr. Speaker: It may be valid to clear up the point of order first. However, I do have to concede that the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) was the last questioner today and that immediately upon the conclusion of his questions two members rose to raise questions of privilege, one being the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) and the other being the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). The Chair recognized the hon. member for St. John's East first. Had the hon. member for St. John's East not been seeking the floor, I presume the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants would have tried to raise his question of privilege immediately upon the conclusion of the questions put by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton.

There is the other question as to whether or not, the exchange having taken place between the hon. member for