

*Privilege*HEALTH AND WELFARE, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SENIORS AND
STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I also rise on a question of privilege.

I wish to bring to the attention of the House events which occurred yesterday during an unrecorded, *in camera* meeting of the standing committee on health and welfare.

I feel that the rights of members of that committee were breached in several ways. There was interference by the office of the chief government Whip when proceedings were interrupted to change membership and substitution forms required to be relayed—

Mr. Speaker: If this is a matter which she alleges took place in the committee, it would seem to me that the Chair does not have any lawful authority to intervene at this time. I think the hon. member's proper course is to take the matter back to the committee. Until such time as I receive a report from the committee, I am not at all sure that I have any authority to act.

[Translation]

PROCEDURE DURING PASSAGE OF CERTAIN MOTIONS

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege, because last night, after the normal sitting hours of the House, the government, with the obvious co-operation of the opposition parties, participated in a brazen manoeuvre for the purpose of expediting more than 15 motions without consultation, which affected my privileges as a member, effectively gagging all independent members of this House in every debate today.

Mr. Speaker, when we consider the attitude of this House, and when we see the members of the three other parties getting upset, it is pretty obvious they feel guilty. I appeal to your sense of responsibility and especially to your obligation to protect the minority in this House. Mr. Speaker, at 3 p.m. we refused to give our consent to certain motions. When the government realized the motions had been rejected, it first made sure that our members were not in the House and then indulged in this brazen manoeuvre. In fact, it is worse than that. It is abuse of parliamentary procedure, because now all three parties have ensured— Just look at all the motions that were passed! I appeal to your sense—

• (1510)

Mr. Speaker: I listened with some concern to the comments made by the hon. member for Shefford. Nevertheless, we have a situation where apparently, the members who were in the House moved a motion that was adopted unanimously.

Consequently, the House has spoken. Perhaps the hon. member has a grievance, but all members have a responsibility to be present in the House during the proceedings.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Consequently, there is no question of privilege.

The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stansstead, on another question of privilege.

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stansstead): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege concerns my constitutional right to be able to speak and vote in this House every time a decision is made.

I was here in the House until after the scheduled sitting hours. At 10.02 p.m., the government moved a motion for the sole purpose of allowing two or three members to speak to the motion on the Constitution. Today, I heard that instead, they intended to pass 15 motions and gag an independent member.

Mr. Speaker, I appeal to your sense of honour and justice, and I ask you to allow independent members in this House, members of the Bloc québécois, to speak to the bills and motions that will be tabled in the House today, despite the orders given last night.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Constitution, the Charter of Rights, members of this House are so proud of —

Mr. Speaker: In his question of privilege, the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead takes a certain position on the events that occurred yesterday, as a result of which a motion conclude the debate received the unanimous consent of all members present.

The hon. member may have a case under the Charter of Rights, but it is not up to the Speaker of the House of Commons to take a position on the Constitution. If the hon. member has a complaint, perhaps a conversation, a dialogue or negotiations with all other members of this House would be in order. Perhaps this approach would be acceptable to the hon. member.