

*Question of Privilege*

guidance, and I am not ready to take in this house any action which would condemn all journalists on account of an article, good or bad. It is not for me to say, in the circumstances, but one thing is certain, it is that the house would now set a precedent which could bring us cases ad infinitum in the future because of such a matter.

Cases might be brought up concerning the Prime Minister or any other member of the house, as well as the Leader of the Official Opposition, and we would be spending our time before the committee on privileges and elections. A journalist has a conscience; he must respect the rights of others and it is only according to his own conscience that he must pattern his behaviour. Mr. Speaker, in the circumstances, I think that the motion does not come under the jurisdiction of the house or the Chair, because it deals only with the fact that a journalist gave his opinion on what he understood; his interpretation might be wrong, but we must at least fight to the end for his right to express his views.

Like any other hon. member, I know that praise is not all we get from journalists. They are not here for that. They are here, for instance, to report the facts accurately and, in this case, it is not only a report but a statement. The hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona might have felt directly involved, as any other member might feel involved at other times by articles in the press, or might have in the past. Nevertheless, I do not think that it is a question of privilege which must be referred to the committee of privileges and elections. It is only a matter of ethics not involving the freedom of the press, and also leaving journalists free to follow the dictates of their own conscience and do as best they can with the facts put at their disposal.

[*English*]

**Mr. Nugent:** If I may, I should like to comment on some of the remarks just made. I believe these arguments might properly be heard with regard to the motion when the Chair puts it, but I should like to offer a solution to a question asked by the Minister of Public Works with regard to what would be referred and whether the motion itself is in order. The minister himself pointed out one paragraph which is a direct breach of my privileges in that it imputes that I was directed from the gallery.

When I raised the question of privilege I think I made it clear that the whole article must be read, in that it imputes that I was

directed in my actions by someone else rather than acting on my own. This again is the same as the direct accusation that I was directed from the gallery. However, the entire tenor of the article indicates that the motive behind my actions was of a sinister character, and that I was seeking to stir up religious strife and to keep French Canadians out of the navy, rather than the honourable motive that I claim. I believe these are properly questions which should go before the committee, and I hope I have satisfied the Minister of Public Works on that point.

**Mr. McIlraith:** I wonder if I could ask the hon. member a question which may clarify the matter. It would appear from his remarks now that the sentence about which the hon. member complains is as follows:

The latter directed from the public gallery the attack of the Conservative member Terry Nugent against Hon. Mr. Hellyer, Wednesday.

If I am correct in my assumption surely the hon. member has but to assert that he was not directed from the gallery, that the motions made there were not directions which he took, and we have to accept the hon. member's word. I am sure all hon. members will gladly accept his word. This would conclude the matter. It seems to me that we have lost our sense of perspective in this whole business. I understand the hon. member is making it clear, although he has not specifically asserted it, that he was not being directed from the gallery. If he makes that assertion, then that concludes the whole matter and there is nothing further to come before the house at this point.

The other interesting matters that were raised by hon. members are not germane to the issue today, and are points which can be debated on other occasions. The attributes of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition and whether he has one view or another are topics that can be debated on another occasion. It is something that is not before us today, as I am sure he will agree, and it can be debated in another forum.

**Mr. Nugent:** If I may be permitted to answer the minister's question, I may say that I am surprised and disappointed that he was not listening to me just a minute ago. I made it plain that it was not one sentence of the article to which I objected, it was to the entire tenor of the whole article; the misquotation of fact and the distortion of the procedures of this house as outlined in the whole article. The story imputed improper motives