

member. Only the hon. member who spoke in the House can correct his own speech.

The hon. member for Burnaby also raised in his question of privilege the fact that answers to questions he had asked were long overdue, too much so in his opinion. That constitutes a grievance, a legitimate one perhaps, but I repeat that it is a grievance. He is right in trying to express it at the first opportunity, but he chose to do so as a question of privilege. However, as Speaker of this House, I fail to find in the remarks the hon. member has just made, in light of information given by the Solicitor General, any grounds for a question of privilege.

[English]

MR. MUNRO (ESQUIMALT-SAANICH)—RECOGNITION BY CHAIR

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, my question of privilege relates to my right to be heard in this chamber. Following the intervention of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Johnston) in the previous question of privilege, I rose to add what I thought were three contributing factors, which I thought the Chair might wish to take into account before making a ruling. It may very well be that while I said as I stood, "A question of privilege—" the Chair either did not hear me or understood I was raising a separate question of privilege, in which case I could quite understand I would not be heard at that time. But the points that I wanted to raise were that the President of the Treasury Board, I felt, was quibbling with the matter of time when he was talking about that day's proceedings because he admitted, following that, that there were uninterrupted proceedings under way and at the end of that he was prepared to advise the House—not to submit to questioning but to advise the House, which is a positive gesture by the President of the Treasury Board.

● (1530)

Madam Speaker: I had understood when the hon. member rose to seek the floor that he wanted to intervene on the question of privilege that was being debated in the House. I thought that the hon. member was now raising a new question of privilege. I believe when I recognized him that I asked the hon. member whether he was speaking on a new question of privilege. The reason why I did not recognize the hon. member as a third or fourth intervener in that debate was that I felt that I was sufficiently informed to make a judgment, that there was no question of privilege in the question raised by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

If the hon. member is raising a new question of privilege I will hear him. But if he is referring back to the decision which I have already made on the question raised by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton, I am very sorry but I will not be able to hear him.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, in other words, my right to be heard in this House is being thwarted by the ruling that I had nothing to contribute to that general debate on the question of privilege. My question of privilege now is in protest against my inability to be heard.

Point of Order—Mr. McGrath

Madam Speaker: I really do not feel that the rights of the hon. member to be heard in this chamber have been thwarted by the action that I have just taken. The hon. member knows that the Speaker has the discretion to listen to as many interventions as the Speaker feels are necessary to be sufficiently informed in order to rule on a given question of privilege. At some point in time in these debates, and they often do become debates, the Speaker does have to interrupt, assuming—and the assumption of the House should be—that the Speaker feels that she is sufficiently informed. I do not think that the hon. member can legitimately say that his freedom to express himself in this House has been thwarted by that action.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. McGRATH—NOTICE OF POSSIBLE QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, I have a point of order to raise which I believe is a serious one. It arises out of a line of questioning which I was developing today with the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I raise this point of order now in order to reserve the right later to raise a question of privilege.

It seems to me that when I sought from the Prime Minister an assurance that moneys voted by this House would not be used to undermine the members of this House in a debate that is currently taking place in the House, I did not receive such an assurance from the Prime Minister. The matter goes to the very heart of the responsibilities of each one of us in this House, and of the government, because here we have a situation which is totally unprecedented in my view, whereby the government of the day is using the taxpayers' money to mount a massive national advertising campaign to generate public pressure which is to be, presumably, applied to members of this House on a measure that is still before the House, in support of the governing party's position.

It seems to me that the only time such an advertising campaign could be justified would be if the measure were passed by the House. Then, of course, the government can sell its program because the program has received parliamentary approval. But in this instance we are placed in the invidious position as members of this House of having to stand by and see the very moneys that we voted for the government being used inappropriately, to say the least—

Mr. Nielsen: Illegally.

Mr. McGrath:—and probably illegally, to mount a national advertising campaign the only purpose of which, surely, can be to apply pressure to members of this House to support the position the government is taking before the House. That seems to me to be highly improper. It goes to the very rights and privileges of this House, namely, to hold the government accountable for expenditures of public funds which it in fact has allotted for this purpose.