

Privilege—Mr. Epp

affect their freedoms and privileges. Accordingly, I must find that there is not, in the circumstances, a prima facie case of privilege.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, just before the close of the sitting yesterday the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Hurlburt) made remarks which I feel should never have been allowed to be uttered without challenge. In other words, there was disorder in the debate. It is my understanding that it is not permissible for hon. members to cast aspersions on the character and integrity of members of this House. I would ignore the petty insult to myself personally, but I cannot ignore the gross and unjust insult to my constituents and to every Canadian born outside this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: Nor can I ignore the insinuation, offensive to every teacher in this country, that as a member of the teaching profession one makes no useful contribution to our economy and society. We place great importance on the material trappings and traditions of this House. For example, one does not touch the mace. I submit that personal insults about one's background and personal contribution to this country should never be permitted. I call upon Your Honour to take appropriate action in having the hon. member for Lethbridge retract those slurs and scandalous remarks.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hurlburt: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Without being persuaded of the validity of the point of order at hand, for a number of reasons, I do see at least one other hon. member who wishes to make a contribution on the same point of order, if it be such. As I say, we are in difficulty. Hon. members are aware, of course, that a point of order, if it is to be raised, must be raised at the moment it arises. Nonetheless, I recognize the importance of the subject under discussion. However, at the moment the alleged disorder occurred in the House, the hon. member who has just spoken and who was the target of the remarks which have been put in question was, in fact, in the House. In addition, not only was he present during the course of that discussion but he followed the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Hurlburt) in the debate and did not take the opportunity to raise the point of order at that time.

Under the rules of the House, if one thing is absolutely clear it is that if a point of order is to be raised, it must be raised immediately the alleged disorder occurs. Accordingly, I have some reservations on the point. In any case, I will recognize the hon. member for Lethbridge on the same point of order and hear him before deciding.

Mr. Hurlburt: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is this. I think if hon. members refer to my comments of yesterday they will find I said that the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) came to this country from Guyana some 14 years ago; he was educated here and makes his living here. I think he should be thankful that he lives in a country such as Canada, and he should not continue to get union organizations riled up in order to be elected.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I can only reiterate my earlier remarks. The point of order, if it is being raised, ought to have been raised, in order to conform with our standing orders, at the moment the alleged disorder occurred. I feel the subject is closed. There is not a valid point of order. Accordingly, I feel we must go on to Routine Proceedings.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, when this occurred yesterday afternoon, it was about two and a half minutes before the closing hour. I must admit I was taken completely by surprise that any member of this House would stoop so low. I must admit that I am not familiar with all the procedures in this House. However, I am aware of personal insults.

Second, I do not see what the agitation of unions had to do with the debate. We were debating the Speech from the Throne. I do not see what remarks about where I came from, and what I do in this country, have to do with a throne speech debate.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. KNOWLES—REFERENCE TO REMARKS OF MEMBER FOR LETHBRIDGE

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as Your Honour knows, I gave you notice under the rules that I wished to raise a question of privilege with regard to the remarks made last evening by the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Hurlburt). In a sense, the point has been aired. As a member of this House, I still feel I should, as a matter of privilege, object to the suggestion that because a member of this House was born in Guyana or anywhere else outside of Canada, it is, to quote the hon. member, a sad day for Canada that he has become a member of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I suggest that the strength of this country lies in the fact that we have drawn people from all cultures and all countries, and I believe this House of Commons should say that to the hon. member for Lethbridge.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the question of privilege, the hon. member did, of course, give me notice. As the hon. member well knows, his question of privilege has not been followed by a motion. Therefore, it does not call for any action by the Chair. Under the circumstances, I do not propose to rule as to whether there is a prima facie case because it does not matter. The fact is there are very clear precedents as to what limits an hon. member may go in imputations against another hon. member. Under the circumstances, whatever place they may or may not be in, it is questionable whether it constitutes a question of privilege. In any event, no action is called for by the Chair