

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

APPOINTEE'S RESUMÉ

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. I have in my hand one of the original biographies of those appointed to the Human Rights tribunal Panel. There are 10 lines in it referring to Progressive Conservative involvement. I now have in my hands the document sent to the Human Rights Committee of the House of Commons, from which all 10 of those lines have been deleted. Would he not agree that that would raise a strong suspicion of an effort to mislead?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely reject that out of hand. The fact of the matter is that we received a request for the information for the first time a week ago last Thursday. We gave everything that we had in our office with respect to these appointments, and the basis upon which I had made the appointments. The Hon. Member knows that I brought in changes to the rules here which allow scrutiny of appointments. This Government and this Prime Minister, for the first time—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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PRIVILEGE

INTERRUPTION BY MR. SPEAKER OF STATEMENT UNDER S.O. 21

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege as a result of the decision by Your Honour to interrupt the statement which I was attempting to make pursuant to Standing Order 21 of the Standing Orders of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I know that Hon. Members would agree that when a Member of the House has risen on a question of privilege, all Hon. Members would want to hear the argument and give that Hon. Member the courtesy that would of course be extended to all other Members. Would the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) please continue.

Mr. Robinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I rise on a question of privilege arising from the decision of Your Honour to interrupt the statement which I was making pursuant to Standing Order 21 of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

Surely there can be no privilege more essential or fundamental to Members of the House than freedom of speech. I respectfully suggest that the decision of the Speaker to vet, in effect, the contents of a statement which is made pursuant to Standing Order 21 in the manner in which Your Honour's decision was made, flies in the face of privilege not just of myself but of all Members of the House.

Privilege—Mr. Robinson

I was attempting to raise an issue of serious concern with respect to comments that had been made, after all, under the same Standing Order 21 on Monday, October 20 last, by the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor). In his comments to the House the Hon. Member for Bow River referred to certain suggestions that had been made by the New Democratic Party with respect to a policy of non-discrimination in hiring at all levels of federal jurisdiction, including the R.C.M.P.

The Hon. Member made certain comments which I think not only gays and lesbians but all Canadians who believe in human rights and minority rights would find deeply offensive and insulting. The Hon. Member referred to fairies and lesbian R.C.M.P. fairies, and hitting people over the head with powder puffs.

I suggest that it is entirely in order for another Member to rise in his or her place and suggest that those kinds of comments have no place in Canada today, in a Canada which respects minorities. That was the intent of my submission and the intent of my remarks under Standing Order 21.

While Your Honour in fact interrupted the Hon. Member for Bow River in the course of his remarks, Your Honour pointed out, as reported at page 510 of *Hansard*, that the remarks of the Hon. Member for Bow River:

—might cause a question of privilege or point of order in the Chamber.

Indeed, I suggest that according to Citation 325 of *Beauchesne*, Your Honour has an obligation to insist that the Hon. Member for Bow River withdraw, retract, the offensive expressions which he has made and apologize to the House and all Canadians for those offensive expressions. I submit that as a point of order.

In conclusion, my question of privilege is that surely Members of the House have the right to seek to rise in their places pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 21 to point out in a respectful and appropriate manner that the kind of language and stereotypical and homophobic rantings of the Member for Bow River have no place either in the House or anywhere else in this country. That was my purpose in seeking to remind all Members of the existence of a Charter of Rights which protects minorities in Canada. I hope, upon reflection, that Your Honour might recognize that such a statement is indeed entirely within the Standing Orders of the House.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, if one looks at Standing Order 21, the qualifying section of that Standing Order is that a Speaker may order a Member to resume his or her seat if, in the opinion of the Speaker, improper use is made of the Standing Order. That is precisely what you did today, Mr. Speaker. That is precisely what you did on Monday, October 20, 1986, with the suitable admonition.

I believe what you are trying to do is to apply the rules in a consistent manner. What is good for the application of the rules on this side should apply to the application of the rules on the other side.