

be happy to withdraw them. I will withdraw them in advance, in fact, because I do not think there is any such slur. I was drawing attention to the fact that while His Honour had indicated there would be amendments to the motion, it has been my understanding that when such amendments are made to a motion before the House, the amendments are made visibly with all of us present. It would have been helpful if the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence), after having made those changes, had given us the motion in advance so that we could have considered it instead of having it sprung upon us at the last moment. That is an indication of the seriousness with which we ought to deal with his suggestions in the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It may be useful to lay two points to rest in order that they might be set aside for all time in respect to the balance of the discussion on this motion.

The first has to do with the remarks that I made earlier today about the change in the text of the motion moved by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). Indeed, I did telegraph that, I thought, when I made the preliminary part of this decision on November 9 and indicated there might be some desire to change the text of the motion, although I did not think I would find it out of order. In fact I invited the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham to collaborate with the officers at the Table to get some advice on an amended text. He collaborated not only with them but with the parliamentary counsel which, of course, is his perfect right in the circumstances.

If I gave the impression earlier today that he collaborated with me, then I gave a mistaken impression, because he did not. He took advice and came up with an amended text, which I put to the House today. He had some assistance and advice from counsel and from the officers of the Table in order that the motion might be brought in greater line with our precedents. I did not in any way know of the firm text of the motion until today when it was moved by the hon. member, and seconded by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I may have compounded the difficulty by inadvertently giving an indication when I said "the officers of the Table". I may have said the Chair and, if I did, I did that incorrectly. There was no collaboration with the Chair.

I did not think I had the right to release any motion to anybody until it was moved by a member in the House itself.

There have been some comments on the second question already, and I cannot stop anyone from making these comments, but there has been some preliminary comment on the role of the Chair in respect to questions of privilege. On two occasions recently I have found questions of privilege, one in respect of the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). A vote in the House did not support that.

This was another question of privilege in which I found a prima facie case. There has already been an indication that government members will vote against it. I do not think I am saying anything inaccurately in view of the presentation just

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made. I think we ought to keep clear that we each have a respective role to play in this matter. If I want to be guaranteed that no adverse result will take place on the floor in respect to a prima facie case of privilege, I can quite easily guarantee that by never finding one. In respect of the hon. member for Nickel Belt, I think the House will know that I reached some, and extended the benefit of the doubt to the hon. member for Nickel Belt. I did not think I was reaching to the same extent here. Nevertheless, if I am to be encouraged to reach in some of these new areas, to extend the judgment of the Chair in favour of an hon. member being able to have the opportunity of putting his question of privilege to the House, then I have to take the risk that on some occasions the House is not going to accept it.

If I have to be guaranteed that the House is going to support that very decision, then I think the sensible course for me to follow is never to accept one and then I cannot be in any jeopardy. If the House expects me to extend privilege more to members of the House, we must expect that the decision which I make and the decision which the House takes are never one and the same decisions, but separate decisions by separate people in different roles. Therefore, I would invite the House, to this extent at least, to co-operate and lay that point to rest in this discussion for all time. I think it would be better to concentrate simply on the merits of the question before us.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I had intended to raise the same point as my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre, but in view of what Your Honour has said I will not touch it until I hear what the President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) may have to say tomorrow.

I think his synthetic and simulated indignation about the terms of this motion is a clear indication of the weakness of his case. I would like the hon. gentleman to reflect on the position of members of the opposition from time to time, who are faced with a supply bill with no notice at all. We are expected to debate a matter sometimes involving hundreds of millions of dollars, and billions of dollars at times. I ask the hon. gentleman to reflect on situations where sometimes legislation dealing with strikes are brought in to this House and presented to members of the opposition who are asked to debate them almost instantaneously. There are many situations where the opposition is greeted with the necessity of having to participate on a very important matter with virtually no notice at all.

The hon. gentleman talked about the McDonald royal commission set up at our instance. Were we consulted about the terms of the order in council which was enacted in order to found the operations and the activities of that royal commission? I suggest that the attitude of the hon. gentleman—

Mr. Dick: He is sneaking out of the House now.

Mr. Baldwin: He may not be a lawyer but he has learned one of the earlier tricks of some lawyers, that if you have a case which is weak in the facts you try to emphasize the law. If the law is bad you emphasize the facts. But when you have neither facts nor law on your side, you scream and beat the