

Privilege—Mr. Nowlan

I am asking the Prime Minister to withdraw, not that I am personally upset as I said earlier, especially in view of the source, but there has to be some dignity in this Chamber. On that basis I am asking the Prime Minister to withdraw the word rather than my getting into a dissection of all of the rulings made in this House for the last 50 years or 60 years.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very well recognized that the word I used is not unparliamentary. I would suggest that what the Hon. Member has been doing repeatedly is using his privilege to make accusations and insinuations in the House, which he knows would bring a libel case against him if he were to make them outside. I suggest that is contrary to the spirit of Parliament and is undignified to the utmost degree.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I should like to let the Prime Minister know that I have every intention, outside the House, to pose the same question about the cowardice or courage of the Prime Minister in allowing a chairman, where legitimate questions have arisen over the conduct of this office regardless of criminality, stay in office heading the board of one of the most prestigious Crown corporations in the land.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect, the Hon. Member is going beyond the point he raised in the beginning in terms of parliamentary language. I was hoping that at this point there would be a disposition to go on.

Is the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) rising on the same matter?

Mr. Broadbent: A different question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) rising on the same matter?

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): I am rising on the same matter, Mr. Speaker. I would draw your attention to Beuchesne at page 111 where it suggests that it is parliamentary to use the word "coward". However, if the Chair were to examine the reference in the debate the Chair would find that that reference was used by a Member who suggested that another Member, who did not have the courage to take the floor, was being a coward by not taking the floor to rise in debate. I suggest to the Chair that the word "coward" as used by the Prime Minister was not parliamentary and it can be distinguished by looking at the case which is referred to as supporting the use of the word "coward".

I do not think one can simply look at Beuchesne; one has to look at what the ruling was based on. I suggest to the Chair that the word "coward" is unparliamentary, and the Prime Minister should be asked to withdraw it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am now citing from Beuchesne's Fifth Edition, Chapter 7, page 110 and 111 as follows:

Since 1958, it has been ruled parliamentary to use the following expressions:

One of them is the word "coward". The Chair at this stage cannot go beyond the citations in Beuchesne.

The Chair has taken note of the fact that the Prime Minister, in his second statement, rephrased his remarks very carefully and made his statement in very temperate and careful language. I would hope there would be a disposition by the House at this point to proceed to another matter.

MR. BROADBENT—STATEMENT OF MR. TRUDEAU DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a separate question of privilege. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said earlier that he was about to commit an indiscretion. I think that is to put it euphemistically. He stated to the House that at a dinner—I presume he was referring to the dinner at his own residence at the time of the First Ministers Conference recently—all the West—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member appears to be entering into debate.

Mr. Broadbent: No, I am not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the Hon. Member rising on a point of order? What is the purpose for which he is seeking the recognition of the Chair?

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege, if you will listen to it. Just listen to the question of privilege.

Just a few minutes ago in the House the Prime Minister got up and said to the House of Commons that the western Premiers who were at that dinner, without exception, agreed that there should be a change in the Crow rate.

I want to say to the Prime Minister that he misinformed the House, deliberately or otherwise. He had better correct that because I have just contacted the Premier of the Province of Manitoba who says that that assertion is false.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I want Hon. Members to bear in mind the dignity of the House. At this point the Chair cannot permit Members to enter into debate, and the fact that there is an opportunity and a forum to do it—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair cannot, on the face of it, see a question of privilege. It may be a matter of debate. On the face of it, it is not privilege.

Is the Right Hon. Prime Minister seeking to be recognized?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to interfere with your ruling but I can say that I am somewhat surprised, if the Hon. Member is quoting Premier Pawley correctly. Premier Pawley is on record—in his case I did not think I was making an indiscretion—Premier Pawley is on record as saying that the recent changes made by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin)—he is happy that they have been made. He is happy with them. So maybe the Hon.