

very properly defends their interest. I was trying to point out that there are other points of view, and of course I apologize if I have offended the hon. member.

MR. MCKNIGHT—LETTER WRITTEN BY MR. DE CORNEILLE

**Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Madam Speaker, several weeks ago I gave notice of the question of privilege which I should like to bring to the attention of the House. It arises out of the propriety of the use of members' facilities and the privileges which go with the use of those facilities, that reflect on all members of the House, by the hon. member for Eglinton-Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille).

I have stood twice to raise this matter, and the hon. member was not in the House. I see that he is not present at this time, but I will proceed because I think I have waited long enough. My question of privilege arises out of a letter dated October 28, 1980, bearing the crest of the House of Commons, which the hon. member for Eglinton-Lawrence circulated on behalf of an organization called the "National Committee for Human Rights Charter". On this piece of House of Commons stationery he was soliciting the membership, and for members for this organization.

The hon. member is the national chairman of this committee, and the return address for this petition is in care of the national chairman, Box 547, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5P6. He solicited memberships for an organization and used the crest of the House of Commons, which is something we all value, which is something that is very special in Canada, and which I hope is something under the protection of the Chair. The letter was circulated to clergymen across Canada.

I should like to read one reaction to this communication and how it reflects upon all members of the House of Commons. The letter is dated at Unity, Saskatchewan, and it reads as follows:

Roland de Corneille, M.P.  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir,

Your letter dated October 28, enclosing a petition for a charter of rights and freedom has made me very angry.

Firstly, in your letter you say, "That human rights should not be a partisan political issue." That may be so, but the fact is that the proposed charter of rights as a part of our constitution is a partisan political issue today. Seven of ten provincial premiers strongly oppose the entrenchment of this particular charter of rights. The charter listed on your petition has a remarkable similarity to the charter proposed by the Prime Minister. From my reading, there are many knowledgeable legal and political commentators who have serious reservations about this particular form of a charter of rights.

I cannot decide which makes me more angry; your assumption of my naivety that I would accept this petition as a simple humanitarian statement, or that you are seeking my support and the support of my congregation on a religious basis for a petition that will certainly be used for partisan political purposes.

My second objection is to your use of your free mailing privileges as a member of Parliament to send out this document. I would suspect that you would be legally correct, though morally suspect to use those privileges to send out political materials. If, however, the "National Committee for a Human Rights Charter" does exist, I can see no justification for you using your free mailing privileges for an organization's mailings.

### *Privilege—Mr. McKnight*

I would find your whole letter disgusting if it were from an ordinary politician. The fact that you are a minister of the gospel and sign your letter as "Rev." I find to be an abomination.

Yours

(Rev.) Harold C. Black

● (1530)

Madam Speaker, the first point I would like to bring to the attention of the Chair is that I, and other members of this House, who happen to be involved in other organizations and who happen to have businesses or are members—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Beauchamp-Niquet:** I am sorry, Madam Speaker, we seem to have lost the French interpretation and I would like you to check on this if you would.

**Madam Speaker:** I believe that this has been done.

[English]

**Mr. McKnight:** I am sorry that I cannot assist the hon. member, Madam Speaker.

There are many members in this House who do belong to other organizations. As a matter of fact there are many members of this House who are owners of businesses, or presidents of their own corporations, who would not use the House of Commons stationery with that crest to solicit support for something which is not in the ordinary line of work of a member of Parliament. The reaction caused by this petition, I feel, reflects on all members of the House of Commons. It brings us all under suspicion. I would like to point out that several independent organizations have asked many members of Parliament for their support as members of Parliament to assist in those organizations. Members have given of themselves freely, but they have done so as ordinary members of society and not as members of Parliament.

Madam Speaker, to my knowledge this letter has been sent to at least seven clergymen in my constituency and, no doubt, has been sent to several more clergymen in Canada. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay):

That this matter be referred to the House of Commons Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity of being able to reply to the hon. member and his expressed concerns. First of all, I would like to indicate that, from the point of view of my background and the concerns I have had in the past, I have not suddenly developed a unique concern now but have always had a concern about the matter of human rights and freedoms.

As a matter of fact, I was engaged in a petition campaign in 1971 regarding the International Human Rights Covenants of the United Nations. That campaign was undertaken under the sponsorship of a large number of Canadian organizations including the League of Human Rights of B'nai Brith. At that time, Madam Speaker, that petition campaign involved tens of thousands of Canadians who wished to express