

A week ago a question of privilege was raised by the hon. member for Nickel Belt in connection with a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance on Thursday, February 15.

I have read over the transcript of that meeting. Apparently I suggested that the hon. member for Nickel Belt might be expelled from the hearings. Apparently that is not possible or proper. It did, in a way, reflect upon the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

I want to apologize to the House and to him for that insinuation.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member for Mississauga South that I certainly accept his apology.

I also want to say that I have read over the transcripts. I have said a lot of things about the hon. member. I would like to withdraw anything I said that in any way reflected on the calm, cool personality of the chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members will know that this will make it unnecessary for me to say anything about either of the two hon. members.

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PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I raised with you by letter earlier today a question of privilege. Since that time, as a result of something that was said during Question Period, I must raise another question of privilege.

While I was questioning the Secretary of State, the member for Burlington called me a fishwife. I think that that is unparliamentary. My question was a serious one. It should be taken very seriously by the government.

I do not feel at all comfortable being called a fishwife. I think it is wrong.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to act on this matter. I would like the hon. member to withdraw the comment. It was heard on the television sets across this country as well.

Privilege

Some hon. members: Shame!

Ms. Black: Mr. Speaker, my second question of privilege—

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member will let me deal with the first question, I will do so. Then I will immediately recognize her again on the second question.

Does the hon. member for Burlington wish to respond?

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, I do not recall directing a comment of that kind at the hon. member. I do not even know the question she was asking. I was not paying any attention.

However, if she thinks the comment I made was meant for her, I will withdraw it.

Ms. Black: That is a gracious response.

MAIN ESTIMATES

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to my second question of privilege.

This morning I was in the lock-up sponsored by Treasury Board to inform members of Parliament in a secure environment about the Estimates and how they would impact on various departments.

When I asked specific questions on the impact of the cuts to women's programming, I was told that that information was not available and would not be available for approximately a week and a half. I asked specific questions about that program, about multiculturalism, native affairs and programs for visible and minority women.

I was told the information was not available. I left the lock-up after spending an hour and a half in there. I returned to my office one minute later and received phone calls from women's organizations from the Yukon, British Columbia, Quebec—from almost every province. The people calling were telling me they had been informed that their funding had been cut 100 per cent. I received calls from CRIAW and other women's organizations telling me their funding had been cut 20 per cent.

It is obvious to me that this information was available. It had been made public. Yet it was withheld from members of Parliament.