

Supply

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. I doubt if he has that courage.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, my question is not designed to amuse the previous speaker, but in view of his long experience here, both as a backbencher and as a Minister, I want to ask him if he is as concerned as I am. I heard him speak about his concern about this kind of debate and, even more important, the kinds of questions which have been asked for more than a week now, going into the homes of the nation. Is he concerned, not only about the reputation of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), but whether he believes that indeed the reputation of any Minister or any Member of the House is safe if other Members can get up and, through innuendo and smear, attack an individual in the House, without making a charge, without repeating those charges outside the House, without putting their reputations on the line too?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I do not think too many Members resort to those tactics, although some on this side have not been above adopting such tactics at one time or another. I have thought of this many times because I was here in the sixties. I was here, but I was not too concerned about the Ministers who were under attack. I was concerned about those who were not part of the House of Commons, concerned about those who did not have access to the House of Commons to defend themselves. Mr. Gillespie does not have that access, but at least he is a political figure and he can defend himself outside this place. I remember a young law student named Guy Lord whose name was dragged into debate by the Hon. Member for Yukon. He had to leave here because of the stigma, and went to Paris to complete his studies. When the reports were tabled a month later by the judiciary he was totally exonerated of any wrongdoing. I am not suggesting that he was brought into the debate on purpose. I mean that. Because of our immunity there are innocent victims, and just like others who suffered from those difficult times, there is very little we can say by way of consolation. That should not be interpreted as meaning any limitations should be placed on the role of the Opposition. The Opposition has an obligation to probe, demand and ask the type of questions, which I thought the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) did today in very appropriate parliamentary style. That is the job of the Opposition. It is not the job of the Opposition to drag in red herrings and to smear people, or to use the type of tactics that could not be used by learned counsel in court. Perhaps it is time to review the whole concept of immunity. Maybe we could set up some rules.

● (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please.

[*Translation*]

The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) on a point of order.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order to get the floor. I would like to draw your attention to Standing Order 35(1), which I quote:

Unless otherwise provided in these Standing Orders, when the Speaker is in the Chair, no Member, except the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, or a Minister moving a government order and the Member speaking in reply immediately after such Minister, or a Member making a motion of "no-confidence" in the government and a Minister replying thereto, shall speak for more than twenty minutes at a time in any debate. Following the speech of each Member a period not exceeding ten minutes shall be made available, if required, to allow Members to ask questions and comment briefly on matters relevant to the speech and to allow responses thereto.

However, Mr. Speaker, keeping in mind the first few words of that Standing Order 35(1) which read "Unless otherwise provided in these Standing Orders", I will now quote Standing Order 62(13) to which I draw your attention because it is contradictory:

During proceedings on any item of business under the provisions of this Standing Order—

—and this Standing Order refers to an Opposition day such as we now have—

—no Member may speak more than once or longer than twenty minutes. Following the speech of each Member, a period not exceeding ten minutes shall be made available, if required, to allow Members to ask questions and to comment briefly on matters relevant to the speech and to allow responses thereto.

Here is the point I want to raise, Mr. Speaker: the Hon. Member who is about to speak belongs to the Progressive Conservative Party. Of all speakers today, he is the only one who will not have had the opportunity of facing questions and answers once he has completed his remarks, because of the hour at which he will begin his speech. Under the circumstances, if he has the least bit of courage, I am asking him to agree in advance to shorten his remarks by five minutes so as to enable Hon. Members to ask him a few questions at the end of his intervention.

[*English*]

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am not rising on a point of order. If the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) wants to ask me questions, I am quite prepared not to see the clock for five minutes so Hon. Members on the other side can ask questions. I am asking only for ten minutes in which to give my speech. Certainly we will give unanimous consent not to see the clock for five minutes so that Hon. Members can ask their questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andre: Let me make it abundantly clear, and I am being repetitive in terms of what has been said here earlier today by Members from this side of the House, both by Conservatives and by New Democrats, but the question at issue is not the character of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde). There is no accusation nor has there been a hint of an accusation that the Minister of Finance has pocketed some money or has gained illicitly from this deal. There is no suggestion that the Minister of Finance acted in a way con-