

*Question of Privilege*

should be to give the Prime Minister an opportunity to reply. He has not yet had an opportunity to say what he has to say.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I think the facts will speak for themselves, and that may be the reason for the points of order that are being raised so indiscriminately. In 1962 the number of days spent on supplementary estimates up to March 16 was 14. I now take a period of time while we were in opposition to set out a comparison in 1952-53, one day—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think the Prime Minister has misunderstood me, because if he continued in that vein he would really be debating the issue of whether or not the conduct of the opposition amounts to obstruction. I do not consider that that point is in issue. The question that was raised was whether there had been a breach of the privileges of the house in what the Prime Minister had said, to the effect that he is now endeavouring to substantiate. The substantiation of what the Prime Minister said would, to my mind, be irrelevant. It opens a debate on the conduct of the opposition rather than on a question of privilege. I had only given the Prime Minister the floor to comment as far as was necessary on the charges that were made by the hon. member for Laurier.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I do not know how I can answer the allegations without placing the facts before the house, and I simply want to point out certain facts, that in the period from 1952-53—

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, you have ruled on the point; you have ruled that the Prime Minister cannot continue, and the Prime Minister continues to defy that ruling. He should be the first one in this house to obey your ruling.

**Mr. Walker:** You don't want the truth.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member must at least allow enough latitude until the tenor of the Prime Minister's remarks is apparent. I had indicated to the Prime Minister that an attempt, by the introduction of other evidence, to demonstrate that what has happened amounts to delaying tactics was irrelevant. I think that is the correct view. The Prime Minister is at liberty to comment on what has taken place here in this house in this session, insofar as it has been raised by the hon. member for Laurier, but I would consider it improper to go beyond that to endeavour to establish, by comparison and debate, that fact which is not really at issue.

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**Mr. Diefenbaker:** With the greatest of respect, Mr. Speaker, I do not know how I can answer such an obviously transparent suggestion by the opposition that a question of privilege arises. I point out with great deference, that in the period of five years between 1952 and 1956, supplementary estimates took nine days.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Robichaud:** Defying the Speaker again.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We must allow the hon. member reasonable latitude to make his point. He has to express his view.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The total number of days taken up on supplementary estimates was nine days, for five years.

**Mr. Benidickson:** Why not 1957?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I appreciate the position Your Honour is in, trying to accommodate both sides with a sense of fairness, but Your Honour has made a ruling and the Prime Minister has now twice, in my judgment, defied that ruling. If it is felt that there should be a discussion of this matter on the merits there is a procedure open to the house, and that is to allow both sides to discuss the merits of the question. But the Prime Minister, although he is the leader of the house, has now risen for the second time and each time he has risen he has defied your ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think perhaps the hon. member has some justification for his point, but I suggest to him that he is prejudging the issue. The Prime Minister must be given some latitude to deal with the matter in his own discretion. I have indicated the lines which I think are appropriate, and I am sure the house will give the Prime Minister an opportunity to comment, as he is entitled to do, on what was said by the hon. member for Laurier, without being unduly restrictive and sensitive. If I find that it goes beyond what I consider to be the appropriate course, I shall take the necessary steps.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** On that, Mr. Speaker, I am simply pointing out that the hon. gentlemen's sensibilities are easily aroused. A statement has been made that I said something that apparently was unfair.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** No; untrue.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** What I did was simply point out that in a period of five years, when we were equally careful in examining estimates, we used up nine days on supplementary estimates, and so far 14 days have been used up by the opposition this session. I can only repeat, having read each