

*Question of Privilege*

Whether the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot supports the motion of the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Nugent) is his business. Whether he is a Conservative is his business. But whether he is a French Canadian or claims to be a French Canadian, we have a right to doubt it.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, those people are always willing to raise issues and to exaggerate the problem. What happened in *Le Droit* in an article by Marcel Pépin, also happened in the English press of Toronto, indeed of all Canada, perhaps not against the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona, but against the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) himself. Was there any thought given to raising the matter in this house? Never. Did the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona and the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, consider calling before the Bar of the House of Commons Mr. Dalton Camp, who is busy knocking down the Leader of the Opposition throughout Canada?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the motion now before the house; I am now under the impression that he is making the problem worse.

**Mr. Caouette:** Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to worsen the problem; I only want to tell a thing or two to those who raise in the house matters which should not be raised. I agree with the hon. member: if a member feels he is attacked personally in his integrity, in his honour, he has the right to summon before the House of Commons any journalist, whether he is French speaking or English speaking. However to conclude that in that editorial, the hon. member has been taken to task, that is quite another matter. That the journalist saw, as he said himself, signs exchanged between journalists and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer), that there are signs exchanged between deaf and dumb from time to time, that is normal—the deaf in the house and the dumb in the press gallery—however, journalists have nevertheless the right to write and we must recognize that but even though we do not like the way they do it. The hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona should admit that.

We have seen journalists who were once in the press gallery where they used to attack politicians, and members of the house, elected as members of Parliament. The hon. member

for Hochelaga (Mr. Pelletier) is perhaps one of those who wrote most against members when he was a journalist and today, you can see him sitting quietly in his seat. He speaks no more, he admires the body of representatives, he likes the hon. members, he no longer writes against them.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should put that matter aside, even though you decided the motion was acceptable, in order not to create a precedent. In my opinion, it would create a precedent to accept summoning Marcel Pépin before the committee on privileges and elections.

Mind you, Mr. Speaker, my intention is not at all to defend personally Marcel Pépin. No, but, I want to defend the freedom which must exist among journalists in a well-understood democracy.

That is the reason why I will ask the members of my group to vote against that motion. If ever a more important, more contentious, more serious matter is raised before the house our vote against that motion will not necessarily be the same. It will depend on circumstances. All depends on the seriousness of the charge and under the circumstances, I think that the charge is not serious enough to bring us to support the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona and this is why we intend to vote against his motion.

[*English*]

**Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to state very briefly that it is not our intention to support the motion. The objective of this debate seems to have been to give to a rather worthless article interest and attention that it never deserved. Were we to support the motion, I fear we might then be tempted to fall into the trap of searching the press ourselves for comments which we did not regard as favourable. I am afraid that should we practise that exercise we would find ourselves occupied with little else over the next year or so.

**Some hon. Members: Question.**

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, it seems obvious now from the comments of spokesmen from the different parties and the applause from the government side that the motion is going to be defeated. Such being the case, I should just like to say to the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona that he should not be discouraged because this will give him an opportunity to come back again tomorrow.