

Privilege—Mr. Hanna

PRIVILEGE

one paragraph concerning the time when Athens was threatened. It reads as follows:

The part of Alcibiades in the revolution consisted only in giving it a start by raising false expectations of a Persian alliance. His agents went to Athens, and there Pisander, who took the leading part among them, addressing the assembly of the citizens, urged that the only hope of salvation for Athens lay in an alliance with Persia, and declared that that alliance would be made if they would invite Alcibiades to return, abolish their democracy, which was not to the liking of the king of Persia, and set up in its stead an oligarchy which the king could trust. The assembly was grieved at the prospect of losing its democratic constitution, but under the stress of circumstances gave some kind of provisional approval of the proposed change.

That was in ancient Athens. That was the first step they took to lose their democracy. They received a proposition they could not investigate. They were told they had to hurry up to get it through in order to make the alliance, and so they hurried it up without investigating it properly, and that finished off their democratic government.

A little later we had the same situation with the Romans. Again the Romans were compelled time after time to use dictatorial powers of government to expedite matters because it was more efficient. What happened? As all hon. members know, the senate of the people of Rome became so used to the undemocratic processes that it was an easy mark eventually for the dictator, Julius Caesar, to take over.

Hon. members may think such a thing cannot happen here. We may wear different clothes and we may have automobiles and television; the physical things such as that may change, but human nature does not change one iota from one generation to the next. Once the thin edge of the wedge—and in this case it is a not so thin edge of the wedge—is inserted, it is the beginning of the destruction of democratic processes. When expediency and efficiency are the arguments used to destroy the rules of parliament, it is the first long step toward the destruction of democracy itself.

It is six o'clock. May I move the adjournment of the debate?

Progress reported.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Harris: We shall continue with this tomorrow, sir.

MR. HANNA—REFERENCE TO REMARKS IN DEBATE THIS DAY

Mr. R. F. L. Hanna (Edmonton-Strathcona): May I rise on a question of personal privilege. Earlier this afternoon the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), the leader of the C.C.F. party, made reference to the unfortunate fact that certain members of this House of Commons have fallen ill in recent days. He followed that up with the accusation that this announcement by him was greeted with laughter from the Liberal benches.

Mr. Fleming: It was, too.

Mr. Hanna: I wish to deny that I laughed at the misfortune of any hon. member who is unfortunately taken ill, nor do I believe that any member on this side of the house did or would laugh.

Mr. Fleming: They did.

Mr. Hanna: My point is that I challenge the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar to name the people he accused of laughter at this report. If he cannot name them, I suggest that he withdraw that remark and have it stricken from the record.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggar): I heard the laughter, as everyone else on this side did. I did not pay any particular attention as to the gentlemen, or the men, who were making the noise, but it was largely over in that corner of the house, and I point over there now.

Mr. Claude Richardson (St. Lawrence-St. George): If I may, on a question of privilege I certainly deny any laughter.

Mr. Bell: We are narrowing it down, anyway.

Mr. Speaker: At this moment we should not take the time of the house to try to identify who has or has not at a certain moment of our proceedings been laughing. Has the leader of the house announced the business?

Mr. Harris: I did, sir. I said that this debate would be continued.

At six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.