

*Interim Supply*

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition and with the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton that we are discussing the expenditure of money and I believe it is the case that some of that money is for the expenditures of the flag committee. All right, we can discuss what went on in the flag committee; but to discuss in committee of supply what an individual has done outside the house is a different story. While I do not presume to define what Your Honour is trying to rule on, it has been my understanding that it is that narrow aspect of the matter on which you have been trying to make a ruling.

**Mr. Thomas:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to refer to Beauchesne, fourth edition, citation 119, paragraph 2:

In parliament every corner of the country is represented and no rule should silence elected representatives when they think they have a message to deliver. Freedom of speech is a sacred principle and if there is a place where it should be fully respected that place is the parliament of the nation, and it is the Speaker's responsibility to see that this principle is not infringed upon.

Paragraph 3 reads as follows:

Relevancy is not easy to define. A wrong comprehension of it may have a serious effect on the freedom of speech. Members are often deprived of their right to speak on the pretext that their remarks are irrelevant when as a matter of fact they refer to matters perhaps remote but yet related, even indirectly, to the question under debate. In borderline cases the members should be given the benefit of the doubt. A great deal of latitude must be allowed in the House of Commons which is a forum where every phase of public affairs can be discussed and every member has the right to be heard, even if in doing so he sometimes disregards the rigidity of procedure.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Frenette:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank you for giving hon. members the opportunity to express their opinion on the rules of relevancy you would have the committee follow.

Obviously, I am not an authority on parliamentary procedure, but in view of the reputation enjoyed by the parliament of Canada among the public, I feel it is imperative for us to proceed in an orderly fashion and for the Chair to be recognized as the proper authority concerning our proceedings.

In my opinion, it is unthinkable that every time you seek to restrict an hon. member to the matter under consideration, the member in question should rise to argue with you and then keep on with his remarks as if nothing had happened.

I am of the opinion that the authority of the Chair must be respected by all members, and we now have a golden opportunity to

[*Mr. Knowles.*]

prove, not only our maturity, but also our intention to work in the interest of the Canadian people.

I agree wholeheartedly with your decision.

**Mr. Rondeau:** Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to speak on the same subject—

**The Chairman:** Does the hon. member wish to speak to the point of order?

**Mr. Rondeau:** No, Mr. Chairman.

[*Text*]

**The Chairman:** The point raised has been well discussed and well aired, and perhaps the result of the discussion would seem to indicate that the Chair was on the right track from the start. However, at this point I should not like to make a general ruling, and the ruling that the Chair was attempting to make or was suggesting to the hon. member was that his remarks should not be directed to the conduct of an hon. member individually. I am sure he will want to abide by this ruling of the Chair.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Chairman, I think I can come within the terms of your ruling in this way. I want to ask this question. Was the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra—I am not talking about him personally—a front for the government?

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Government members say no. We would like to hear them on that point. Were government members getting leaks from the committee during the course of the committee's sittings?

**Mr. Deachman:** On a point of personal privilege, Mr. Chairman—

**The Chairman:** Order. The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra is rising on a question of privilege.

**Mr. Deachman:** Mr. Chairman, today I indicated very clearly to Mr. Speaker in the house that I had not been in contact with anyone in connection with this matter, and the story which I prepared I prepared myself and I released it to the press for publication after the house had opened.

**Mr. Churchill:** Nonsense.

**Mr. Deachman:** It was given to the press only after the committee had concluded its hearings.

**Mr. Woolliams:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman—