

Privilege

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the procedure of this matter in that the matter was raised perhaps without the member himself being forewarned or even asked about it before it was raised.

We have here a situation of procedure in which we are not asking about the member's behaviour but about the consequences of someone else's behaviour. We may, as a result of this procedure, be leaving an impression, perhaps over a number of hours, that the member had some knowledge of it, when it is a third person who has taken the action that we are talking about.

I am concerned about the procedure. Is it proper to raise this matter without having forewarned the member concerned that the matter was going to be raised and giving that member a chance to speak to it before it was raised? What we leave is an impression that the member knew about it. I think that procedure is threatening to every single member.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to raise a quick point.

The government House leader and the Whip for our party have both raised a concern about the metal detectors. I must say that I have some concern, which I know is shared by some of my colleagues in this corner of the House, at this matter being raised publicly in this way at this time.

Therefore it seems to me it is important that a decision be made quickly as to what is going to happen in response to it. The country now knows of our security arrangements here and the possible loopholes in it. I would urge the government and yourself, Sir, to deal with this matter promptly.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker I agree with the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. I think the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca has a very good point about a third party being involved.

With respect to the issue of security, I thought we had a Management and Members' Services Committee and a board of "eternal" economy. I still get irritated by the fact that I think both of those committees have more cobwebs around their ears than the House of Commons, in many ways.

Be that as it may, I do take exception—and I most likely stand alone on this business—to the mention of members taking their own guests quickly to the gallery and not going through the metal detectors. That is the way it happens. A member does not send a guest for whom he has signed who can avoid the metal detector. The member has to take him personally.

With all the rules that are coming down internally around this place, hon. members are becoming less honourable because they cannot take their constituents with whom they are physically into the gallery quickly when sometimes time is of the essence.

Quite frankly, as the one little perk left around this place, I would like the Board of Internal Economy or the Management and Members' Services Committee to look at this question, not because of the problem of getting around security in the absence of a member, but to make sure that when the member is with a guest that that member takes the guest to wherever he wants to go, thereby taking responsibility for the actions of that guest. That is the key.

This business of muddying the waters with security and/or metal detectors in the absence of members is really, with respect, a red herring. My God, if we are hon. members, surely we can look after our own guests in our own gallery, when they come to this place.

I would not want the knee-jerk reaction of the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, who is obviously and quite properly worried about security, to start to muddy the waters about who I take into the gallery. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, and you used to be a member yourself—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan —you get long line-ups—

An Hon. Member: What do you mean by "used to be"?

Mr. Nowlan: Now you are more than the first of equals.

If it applies to us, dear Sir, then you will have to take your guest from Room 16, where you have had your little lunch, and put them through the lie detector to come to sit in the Speaker's gallery, if you are going to do this thing holus-bolus.

Some Hon. Members: Lie detector?