

*Privilege—Mr. S. Knowles*

The House itself has developed a regime or practice which has grown up to protect members who feel themselves aggrieved by an allegation; it is a protection in the form of a challenge that the allegation either be substantiated, explained, qualified sufficiently or withdrawn.

The story that I have quoted, in my view clearly reflects upon members on this side of the House. Without substantiation or facts, it puts all of us under a cloud. There has been no denial, or clarification. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, clearly a question of breach of privilege, and that the hon. member either has to be specific in his allegation, or withdraw it. As I say, Mr. Speaker, if you find that my submission is in fact a prima facie case I am prepared to move the necessary motion, that the article as quoted be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Mr. Speaker:** As the House knows, I received notice of such a question from the minister and as well from the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

MR. KNOWLES (WINNIPEG NORTH CENTRE)—FINANCE—  
ALLEGATIONS MADE BY HON. MEMBER FOR YORK-SIMCOE  
REGARDING SPECULATION ON DOLLAR BY MPs

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, as you just indicated, I gave you notice earlier today that if this matter was not raised in some other way, I would do so.

Let me say at the outset of what will be a very brief statement that if this were only a conflict between a member of the official opposition and the government, I would stay out of it. I would let the two of them fight it out. However, when this kind of thing can be said and I refer to the charges that were made over the week end by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), it casts a shadow over parliament itself.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** As I see it, that shadow is cast either way. If there is any truth to the charges, it is a very serious cloud that hangs over us and it ought to be cleared up right away. On the other hand, if there is nothing to the charges, if the allegations are without foundation, that too is a serious thing to happen on the part of any member of parliament. I feel very strongly that the whole question should be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

As I said earlier, there have been indications that Mr. Michael Pitfield conducted investigations. I am not sure from the reports whether it was some time ago or recently. This concerns not only Mr. Pitfield and the Privy Council office. This concerns us all. If the matter is referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Mr. Pitfield should be called before that committee.

I realize that in the absence of the hon. member for York-Simcoe, Your Honour will not want to finalize this matter today. However, I strongly urge that you give favourable consideration to referring the matter to the committee. By saying that, I am really admitting quite openly that I do not know the facts. I doubt if many members of the House know

the facts. I do not think we can settle the issue by cross-fire in the House, but it certainly does need to be looked into.

Perhaps as a bit of a sideline, I may say that it concerned me to discover that the *Toronto Globe and Mail* in its issue of yesterday admitted or reported that it had stopped the run of Saturday's paper, after some 26,000 copies had been printed, to remove a story that it had run because it had been told by the office of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) that the story was not true.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** There are times when the papers report things about us that we think are not true, but I do not know of any instance where they stopped a press run because of our appeal. I think that part of the story ought to be looked into by the committee.

I say, Mr. Speaker, we cannot settle the matter here. We could not settle it even if the hon. member were present. It is interesting that he has denied making certain statements, but over the radio certain statements he made have been played back from a tape. I believe the case is clearly one, not for argument and debate on the floor of the House, but for reference to the appropriate committee.

● (1512)

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) has indicated that he would be prepared to move a motion and I suspect that, under the scheme of things around here, he would have priority over me. But in case his motion does not fit the bill and mine does, I am happy to read the motion I would be prepared to make if your Honour found there was a prima facie case of privilege. It reads:

That the allegations reported to have been made recently concerning speculation by Liberal members of parliament, including two or three cabinet ministers, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for a full inquiry as to whether there is any foundation for such allegations and as to the circumstances under which they were made.

It would be my hope that at a meeting of that committee we might come more closely to grips than we have done as yet with respect to the whole question of conflict of interest and the independence of parliament. It is time we had this place tied up so tightly in these matters that such things as have been charged could not take place and, therefore, that such charges could not be made.

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say how grateful I am to the officials at the Table who were the first to inform me that a question of privilege would be raised today.

The hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) is not in his place today. He is in his own constituency attending a function which was arranged some time ago and which could not be avoided. He will, however, be in the House tomorrow at which time he intends to have something to say, and I would naturally hope Your Honour would allow him to make a contribution before you adjudicate on the matter. I wonder if I