

Statement by Member for York South

In Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, citation 136 cites a case which took place in the House on July 24, 1944, in which a member declared that a measure before the House was a bribe. The Speaker ruled this accusation to be unparliamentary and asked the hon. member to withdraw. When this was not done the member was suspended for the balance of the day's sitting. The hon. member's allegation of blackmail is equally as unparliamentary as the case cited in Beauchesne and as such should be withdrawn.

Citation 138 states that the House of Commons will insist upon all offensive words being withdrawn and upon an ample apology being made which shall satisfy both the House and the member to whom offence has been given.

I believe I have cited a prima facie case of privilege affecting members of this institution itself. I request through you, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for York South withdraw his offensive remarks and make an appropriate apology. In the event the hon. member does not wish to do so and you rule that I do in fact have a prima facie case of privilege, I am prepared to move a motion to send this matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Ontario did give notice last week of his intention to raise this matter by way of a question of privilege. This has given the Chair an opportunity to give the matter serious thought. The hon. member knows that the Chair does not take lightly a question of privilege. I have on numerous, perhaps even countless, occasions suggested to hon. members that it is not easy to establish a prima facie case of privilege. In fact, such a case has not been established for many, many years. I am inclined to reach the same conclusion in respect of the case brought to my attention by the hon. member for Ontario.

I think one of the most important aspects of privilege is that the matter should be raised at the first opportunity. The hon. member says he was outside the House when the words to which he takes exception were spoken. With respect, I suggest to him that is not a sufficient explanation. What he proposes now is that members who do not happen to be in the House at the time words are spoken could receive *Hansard* the next day and then take exception to the words by way of a question of privilege. If an hon. member happened to read *Hansard* three days later he could then say that was the first opportunity he had of bringing the matter before the House. I do not think that in this regard the explanation of the hon. member is quite satisfactory.

What is relevant and important in this case is that when the words to which the hon. member takes exception were spoken in the course of debate, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce took exception to them and rose by way of a question of privilege. I was in the Chair at the time and my impression was that the hon. member for York South explained what he had in mind when he made the statement. Whether his explanation was satisfactory to all hon. members and whether it was satisfactory so far as the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce or the hon. member for Ontario are concerned is perhaps another matter. What I had to be satisfied about was whether improper motives had been imputed. The hon. member for York South explained what he had in mind and the

[Mr. Cafik.]

way he had intended to apply the words he had spoken. I did not think he was addressing his remarks to any particular member individually.

If hon. members will consult the authorities they will note that words which are addressed to one member or two members individually which might be considered unparliamentary are not judged unparliamentary when addressed to a group of members or to a party. I cannot say that I consider there is a question of privilege or a prima facie case of privilege when a member accuses another party of blackmail. It seems to me I have heard that accusation levelled by one party against another very often toward the end of a session. We hear the suggestion that the government is introducing legislation and using blackmail to get its legislation adopted before the end of the session, and the opposition is accused of blackmail because they refuse to have the House recess until certain legislation is adopted. It seems to me that this kind of accusation is part of the political life of the House. I must say it has never scandalized me and does not at this time. I doubt that this is a question of privilege which ought to be considered by a committee of the House. On that basis I would suggest that the matter should not be pursued further.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GRAIN

WITHHOLDING BY GOVERNMENT OF PAYMENTS UNDER TEMPORARY WHEAT RESERVES ACT—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 43 and in relation to pressing and urgent circumstances which are so well known to the House as to be notorious, I would ask leave to put the following motion:

It is the opinion of this House that if the government does not forthwith comply with the law as set out in the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, and purge its contempt of Parliament and the people, it is not fit to govern or to have the confidence of this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The motion of the hon. member requires the unanimous consent of the House. I shall now inquire whether there is unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Apparently there is some dissent and the motion cannot be put.

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LABOUR RELATIONS

WHOLESALE HOMES LIMITED—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43 I should like to put a motion and ask