

Question of Privilege

which seems to make accusations so easily and withhold the evidence, will tell us whether or not he is proud of that party of his which is going to back up this kind of action.

Individual hon. members on the other side who jeered so loudly this afternoon might rise in their places one by one and tell the house whether they really believe they are doing their duty to their constituents by backing a government which says it will smear people and not even bother to look at the evidence. The Minister of Justice says he has the files, yet he has not looked at them. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, making serious slanders in view of that statement? Can you imagine any responsible person asking a whole group of people to live under that sort of cloud of insinuation, while at the same time the admission is made that there is a file in existence which may clear up the whole matter, a file at which the Minister of Justice has not even bothered to look.

The question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, concerns responsibility to this house. The government is responsible to the house, and we as members are also responsible.

An hon. Member: You mean irresponsible.

Mr. Nugent: I heard someone say "irresponsible". Since the hon. member sits on the other side of the house I gather he is speaking for the Liberals. It is true that when you talk of yourselves you do talk of irresponsibility.

I am not satisfied with the action taken by the minister. I am not satisfied that in this case the action of the government constitutes responsible government. My duty, as I see it, as a member is to insist on responsibility from the government. If we do not get it I am going to do my darndest to get rid of the government. I will continue to fight because this is the No. 1 priority item.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nugent: I realize a bunch of trained seals are not very interested in democracy. They are willing to sit back, take orders, jump up and down, and so on.

An hon. Member: You are one yourself.

Mr. Nugent: I never was, nor will I be. I ask any one of those who have interjected to stand up and say they believe this a proper course of conduct for the minister to follow.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Langlois (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

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[*English*]

Mr. Nugent: The hon. member can have the floor as soon as I have finished.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Langlois (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I believe there is a question of privilege being raised. We have many questions of privilege before us at the moment, but we are dealing at the present time with the one on which the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Nugent) is speaking.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member cannot rise at this time when we are considering a question of privilege. If he is raising a point of order, I could recognize him. But we must try to dispose of questions of privilege *seriatim*.

Mr. Langlois (Chicoutimi): I raise a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Speaker, I am pointing out to hon. members—

Mr. Speaker: Order; the hon. member is rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Langlois (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker, the member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Nugent), has been inviting us in the last few minutes, especially those whom he calls the backbenchers, to express our views about the government's conduct.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I presume the invitation of the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona is mainly rhetorical. For the moment, I would suggest that we allow him to proceed with his remarks.

[*English*]

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging that at least one of the backbenchers is apparently concerned with the responsibility of government, and we might look forward to his participation in the debate, instead of this wild desk pounding each time a scurrilous remark is made.

I will close with this observation. If this is responsible government I ask any member who can do so to explain to me how the conduct of the Minister of Justice can be called responsible. I would dearly love to