

Privilege

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions.

I submit that in the tabling of this report there has been no impedance with members' functions or their ability to discharge their functions. We have here a situation where the hon. member disagrees with some of the contents of the report. I have no doubt the government disagrees with some of the contents of the report as well. I suspect if I read it all as thoroughly as the hon. member obviously has I would probably disagree with parts of the report.

However the place for him to take his complaints is not to the House to have the report ruled out of order. The auditor general has a right to submit his opinions to the House. He is an officer of the House and that is his duty. Surely the hon. member should go to the public accounts committee and complain about the report if he disagrees with it. Then the public accounts committee would report to the House saying it disagrees with the auditor general's report if the committee agrees. Surely that is where this complaint ought to go.

The hon. member has not raised a point of order or a question of privilege in my submission. He has raised what I can only suggest is a complaint. He disagrees with the report, fine. He should go to the committee and express his disagreement. That is what the committee is for. That is why it has been referred there.

The Speaker: I think a very important point has been raised today. I take under advisement the opinions of the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster and the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I would like to look at this a bit more closely in view of what has been said today and I would like to more inform myself of the particulars. I will reserve a decision on this point and get back to the House when and if it is needed.

Is this on the same point of order? I do not want to get into a debate going back and forth.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to apologize to my colleagues for not having given more notice and for that matter any notice. I would hope that some of the comments that have been made might change when people have an opportunity to think about it.

The very fact the member gets up and says that I disagree with something in the report is the point I am trying to make. The report should be of such a factual nature that there is nothing in it to disagree with. It should be a report on various facts of a technical nature. The fact that I can find something to agree with or somebody else can find something to disagree with is the point I am trying to make about the report.

Nobody elects the auditor general to make these kinds of judgments. I think we have a situation here that—

• (1515)

The Speaker: I appreciate the member's intervention. I am sure he will agree with other members of the House and with me when I say that I would like to reserve my decision on this matter. I would like to inform myself a little more and get back to the House.

I have a point of privilege from the hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria. Does this point of privilege arise from the question period today?

Mrs. Ringuette—Maltais: Yes.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette—Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is in regard to comments that were made during today's oral question period.

When my colleague from Timiskaming—French River asked his question, part of it was in English and part of it in French. As he was starting to formulate his question, we heard the Bloc member for Roberval's comments. This is a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank you for hearing me out. We heard the hon. member for Roberval shout in this House to the hon. member for Timiskaming—French River: "In French, please. In French".

My question of privilege is as follows: Canada has the charter of rights and freedoms and the Official Languages Act.

The Speaker: One moment, please.

A point of order was raised today but I ruled that it was not a point of order.

[English]

I have ruled on that. I was waiting for the hon. member to get to the point of privilege. It would seem to me at least at this point that we are engaging in debate on a decision I have already taken about a point of order.

To this point at least I have not heard any argument that would deem this to be a point of privilege.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Exchanges take place in the House throughout question period, indeed throughout debate.

I did not hear the statement that was alleged to have been made. Surely we have to be able to tolerate a certain amount of give and take in the House. This is the point I would like to impress on the House. There are going to be times when words may or may not have been used that hon. members say they heard. In my view this is not a point of privilege.