

Privilege—Mr. Rae

The idea of twinning was developed by the national caucus in response to a view that riding associations and members of Parliament could help those areas that do not presently have an elected member.

We are all elected members, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Carney: It is only the Liberal party which will not honour or recognize that we are elected members even though we are not Liberals. In this document, I notice that my twin is the Minister of State for Trade.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe the hon. member is going into a different question. The question of privilege which we are discussing now is a matter of ministers being given responsibilities for regions and constituencies. That is quite different from the practice of twinning, of which I know nothing, but I have heard about it in this House. However, they are two different practices. Therefore, the hon. member would have to address herself to the question of privilege raised rather than bring in a new question at this point.

Miss Carney: Madam Speaker, I will have to check this list against the list which has been tabled. If this list, published by the Liberal Party of Canada, is the same as that which has been tabled today, I would like to reserve my opportunity to speak.

Madam Speaker: Very well. The hon. member for Pembina. I will hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette) on a point of order.

Mr. Collenette: Madam Speaker, I rise to seek some guidance from you. It was my impression that a few moments ago you had decided to reserve your judgment on this question.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Collenette: Are you then going to entertain arguments from every single member from the other side this afternoon?

Madam Speaker: I indicated that I was probably going to reserve on this question, but I did not say definitely that the discussion was over. I do not think I will be able to listen to all hon. members who want to speak on this question, but I will listen to a few as I know the House is quite exercised about this question. In cases like these I think it is prudent for the Chair to hear a number of speakers. I will hear a number, but I am giving notice now that I cannot hear everyone. Perhaps hon. members notice the clock; we must do something about routine proceedings.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, on the point of order raised by the parliamentary secretary and reflected upon by yourself, other dimensions to this same problem have been raised. These emerged when it was raised in the first instance.

I would hope, Madam Speaker, that you will not cut off members who wish to address themselves to those other dimensions so that you have the fullest of information and all of the facts at your disposal before coming to the point on which you

will reserve judgment. I, for one, have a very important and additional dimension to add to this whole matter, and it is part of the same question of privilege.

Madam Speaker: I will allow any new dimension to be explored because it is important to hear interventions. The Chair wants to be as fully informed as possible so that it may rule on this question. However, I think I would insist upon making a distinction between a new dimension and a new question.

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Madam Speaker, the original question raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) was a question of privilege involving one minister sending a cheque to another minister to be sent to the riding. The question of privilege concerned undermining the work of the member. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has sent up a smokescreen entirely hiding the original issue. In my opinion, we should be dealing with that particular issue where one minister is undermining the work of the Member of Parliament for that riding. This is simply a smokescreen. This is a totalitarian, communistic approach and I would suggest the Prime Minister take the paper he tabled and put it where the monkey stuck the peanut because that is all it is good for. We are missing the main point, that of a minister undermining a Member of Parliament. That is the point of privilege, and I think we should be dealing with it.

Madam Speaker: With all respect to the hon. member, I think that is exactly what we are doing. That is the question of privilege and that is the question being discussed.

I had recognized the hon. member for Pembina earlier, I will hear him now.

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Madam Speaker, my contribution will be brief. Let me begin by saying I do support the question of privilege brought forward by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood that this matter be referred to the committee.

I want to comment on a few items which the Prime Minister mentioned. I am glad he has finally tabled the list of who are the various regional ministers.

There are a number of questions which have to be answered. It is obvious that these questions can only be answered in the committee, and that is the reason for my support. Who pays for the regional offices which a good many ministers have established throughout Canada? We have our so-called regional minister; Senator Olson, in Alberta. He has a regional office in the Calgary International Airport. In the event the taxpayer is paying for these offices, the taxpayer has a right to know what these offices cost. Rather than reflecting the wishes of a specific region before Cabinet, it is obvious that these offices are being used to pursue ministers' own political aims. By looking at Alberta's representative, and I am referring specifically to Senator Olson, his voice does not reflect that region. He has been rejected time and time again by the electorate of Alberta. My hon. colleague says he has been rejected three times.