

Privilege

and carry on the discussions which commenced this morning.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Cape Breton—East Richmond raised an interesting point. I was beginning to wonder whether or not I was beginning to initiate my own question of privilege in terms of the personal attacks that the government Whip had made on October 12; I suppose in a sense a reverse question of privilege. I do not want to pursue that.

My point was simply to respond to some of the very personal attacks that I had experienced coming from, to be precise, the government Whip, the hon. member for Calgary West.

We have had discussion. We have two opportunities. Presumably, in the personal attacks by my hon. friend, he had not finished those. We are at a point where we can continue to hear those personal attacks and allow me to respond in total as opposed to only part of them, which I was attempting to do now, or set aside these personal attacks. I do want to respond to the personal attacks at some point.

The other matter concerning Bill C-79 is relatively straightforward. I think all parties have indicated an interest to pursue it and resolve it as quickly as possible. What I am talking about, just on a very personal level, is that these are not attacks against the New Democratic Party or against the opposition. They were personal attacks against myself, levied by a single person from the government benches.

I simply want a right at some point to respond in some detail to what I call another disgusting performance. If the hon. member wants to continue with that performance now, he can do so. If he wants to set it aside while we maybe discuss some aspects of Bill C-79, I am quite prepared to do that; but I do want an opportunity, either now or later in the day after further attacks or at some later date, at least to respond to the allegations the hon. member has made of me.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, what I am after in my question of privilege is the referral of the matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for a report back to the House, because I think the attacks on

members of the committee themselves, including myself, made by the member for Kamloops about Tory members and cabinet generally are of a nature that they pass well beyond the bounds of reasonable criticism, that they are indeed false, and that they indeed bring damage to the reputation of individuals, to members of the House, and to the House itself.

I would be quite happy to give you the assurance, Mr. Speaker, that members on this side of the House would give unanimous consent for such a motion to be moved and the subject matter sent to the committee, including, if he likes, a subset on the supposed slanderous behaviour of the chief government Whip, myself, in relationship to personal attacks on the member.

I am quite willing to have a committee of my peers examine my comments, each and every single one of them, within the context of a total evidentiary picture to determine whether those comments were justified or were not justified. I think people out there in the community would have some difficulty following what are supposed to be my allegations without page numbers and episodes in *Hansard* and so on.

• (1600)

The question of privilege I wish to bring forward is reasonably well documented in terms of exact pieces of paper, which I will put in your possession showing exact pages and exact procedural documents and so on. I do not think that this is the kind of an issue, given the importance of the subject matter and its implications for the reputation of this institution, where we can get by with sloppy research and sloppy half truths.

Sitting here listening to it, I throw out for consideration the possibility of unanimous consent but I am nervous about it. Perhaps in the next half hour we could agree on a motion to refer the matter to committee involving the independents in the House and the leadership of the Liberal Party. Maybe we could bring forward a motion that we refer the subject matter of this entire problem to that committee. I would think members on my side of the House would be willing to support that, even though I have given up the opportunity to lay the whole matter out before the Canadian public in *Hansard* in some detail.