

Privilege

possible precedents because it brought down a government. It was a vote of confidence in a government, a three-day old government. That precedent stands and has represented the law of Parliament throughout the period since, and probably for a good long time before. I invite your Honour to so rule.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona on the same point.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, as much as I would love to get on to Bill C-25, I have listened with care to the arguments that have been presented. I was not here yesterday when these events took place. I have looked at *Hansard*, I have listened to the arguments, and I must say that this whole exchange drives me to abject despair about the House of Commons and where it might be headed. I say this with respect to the fact that *Hansard* shows how people voted and how they did not vote. Obviously this was sorted out at the time.

What the government Whip appears to be doing is suggesting that hon. members from Regina—Lumsden and Windsor—Lake St. Clair in some way or another attempted to deliberately sabotage the voting process or mislead the House with respect to how they voted. I think it is clear on the face of it that that is not what they were about. It was clear on the face of it yesterday or *Hansard* would not record what it records.

The response of the government members is to the tactic of forcing a vote on a matter on which there is no dispute in order to delay, a tactic they do not like but it certainly is a tactic that they would have had no qualms about employing themselves if they felt strongly enough about things.

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member but this House has had many years of experience of tactics to delay. Hon. members on one side or the other may not like those tactics, but provided they are within the rules I have no power, authority or inclination to limit them. What the Chair is faced with here is a question of whether members rose both for the yea and the nay vote. It is that simple. I will have to draw what conclusions I must draw as a consequence.

I do not want the argument to get off into the question of whether or not delaying tactics in the House of Commons are right or wrong. They are used and as long

as they are used within the rules, as I have said many times, they are accepted. We understand that. It is part of the tactics of this place.

The statements on the part of the hon. member for Calgary West, and we have just heard from the hon. member for Halifax West, are very clear. The allegation is that the members rose for both votes. That is what I have to decide. If that is physically so then I have to decide, I suppose, what inference I draw from that.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I will try to be brief and to the point. I think what we have here is not a point of privilege at all but a form of character assassination that I think is unworthy of some of the people that I know on the other side of the House. Frankly, I am quite disappointed by that.

• (1610)

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Cambridge on the same point.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I will indeed be brief. I was here yesterday. After the vote took place, what I heard was the Clerk of the House rise and state quite clearly that the results of the vote were 24 to one. I reviewed the tape this morning and if my memory serves me correctly, the videotape also recorded a 24 to one vote.

My question is that in *Hansard* on Division No. 173, the vote is recorded as 23 to one. As the Speaker reviews the comments over the last half hour, could you take into consideration that once the member from Regina—Lumsden had indeed clarified his vote, the vote count changed in *Hansard*?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Windsor—Lake St. Clair on a further intervention.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I think that my colleague from Winnipeg—Strathcona has well characterized what is at issue here. I would also like to refer to other participants in this argument about how many angles there are on the head of a pin.

First, the Liberal member has indicated that if there was an inadvertence in voting, in this instance yea when the intent was to vote nay, then the effect of that is to cancel the intended vote and let the first vote stand. That seems to suggest to me that there is an assumption that inadvertence is at least possible. Inadvertence, not