

Question of Privilege

judgment I form, and based on that judgment I have reached the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that this question was not raised at the earliest opportunity.

I must suggest to the hon. member that the decision of the Chair should not be changed at this time. The arguments submitted to me by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona have been taken into due consideration in arriving at my decision, which I should now like to confirm.

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Speaker, your ruling cannot be challenged, of course, but I am wondering whether Your Honour has reflected on the fact that since rules are made for the purpose of expediting the work of the house, it should be possible to consider this question in a proper and orderly manner. I am sure you will agree with me that if I have not quite complied with the rules, I have been very close to doing so.

Since I have already put on the record my accusation against the minister I think it would be only fair to him to give him the chance to answer, because the matter is of such a serious nature. I do not think anyone in the house would be satisfied to leave the matter in this position, the minister having been charged with something, for which charge I am willing to take responsibility. Are we going to let the injustice of this situation prevail? Is this house to remain quiet without looking into it further, without giving the minister a chance to defend himself and let the house know whether the charges are responsible? I suggest that you do have the right to reverse your own decision if you feel like doing so.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret to advise the hon. member that I do not feel like reversing my decision. I realize full well the point raised by the hon. member, that we now have on the record certain charges, but they were there before.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The ruling has been made. If hon. members feel that the judgment of the Chair is at fault the rules are in their hands, and they can change the rules to make it possible to appeal decisions of the Chair. However, at the moment this is the situation with which we are faced. The very purpose of changing the rules in the way we did was to express confidence—again rightly or wrongly—in the Speaker's judgment. I have made my ruling and I shall have to confirm it.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to raise a point of order which is based on a statement you made earlier to the house. Your referred us—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): A point of order in relation to the Speaker? Never with respect to the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre knows that I cannot accept a point of order which relates to the ruling which has already been made. That is contrary to the rules of the house.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, my point of order, which I have not yet expressed, is not with respect to your ruling. My point of order deals with this matter. I should like your advice. I should like to lay a charge against the Minister of National Defence on the ground of having misled the house, as it appears to me. The only information received by me to confirm this misleading of the house reached me yesterday at noon, and there was no chance to make adequate preparation for presentation yesterday afternoon.

Now, sir, the impression that has been left with the house is that on August 30, when questions were raised as to whether there had been deletions from the evidence given to the committee, the minister gave an adequate reply. This is exactly the point on which I should like to have some advice. As reported at page 7797 of *Hansard* for August 30 the hon. member for Vancouver East asked the minister:

—was anything cut out prior to the presentation?

The minister replied:

The admiral deleted from his original text two or three references to friendly nations which it was felt would have had rather serious consequences to Canadian external affairs had they been made to the committee.

I submit, sir, that he deleted, as we now know, four pages of text relating to the defence of Canada. That is the subject I should like to have the privilege of raising at my earliest opportunity, which is now.

Mr. Crouse: Lied to the house.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Another Profumo.

Mr. Speaker: Order. What is now being raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre is exactly the same point which was raised before.