

Question of Privilege

even though the latter is not official yet, I think that we could go on to something else.

Everything that will be said from now on will not be very useful. We might as well wait for the findings of an inquiry to know exactly what to think of all that.

That is why I feel that we should now go on to another item—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Grégoire:—and really discuss the business before the house, because the people of Canada—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Grégoire:—have had enough of that; there is a legislative program, they want to see some work done.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. member is getting farther and farther away from the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) tonight. If he wants to keep on talking, he should limit his remarks to that motion or to the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Yukon.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by inviting all hon. members to behave a little more intelligently and come back to what interests the Canadian people; a legislative program for the people, and put a stop to all that dirty and sickening business.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Bow River.

Mr. Knowles: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and I think perhaps I should put it before my hon. friend for Bow River takes the floor. I would hate to get into the middle of his speech.

Mr. Speaker, like my colleague from York South I am still concerned with what it is we are debating. Your Honour said a moment ago that at seven o'clock the hon. member for Yukon raised what he described as a new question of privilege.

An hon. Member: That is right.

Mr. Knowles: Ever since then, except for the time that was taken on the vote, apparently we have been discussing that question of privilege.

I ask Your Honour this question. Is not our practice with respect to a question of privilege this: that an hon. member raises a question of privilege; he might get a bit of

[Mr. Grégoire.]

support here and there, but at some point early in the proceedings the Chair decides whether or not there is a prima facie case of privilege. If there is, a motion is put and then debate may take place on the motion. It seems to me, and I think this is what bothered my colleague from York South, that we are now having what sounds like a debate on the motion, but the motion has not been put. Do I take it that Your Honour has, by implication, suggested that there is another prima facie case of privilege? It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that we should have some ruling before we go on with the debate, which seems to be a debate on a motion which has not yet been put.

Mr. Nielsen: On the point of order raised, I refrained from moving the motion because of the two that are already before Your Honour. The motion that I had in mind moving was that this house call upon the Minister of Justice to substantiate the charges and allegations he has made against the Leader of the Official Opposition and members of the former Conservative government, now hon. members in this house.

It is quite a different motion than proposed by Your Honour.

Mr. Speaker: I think I would perhaps agree that the particular point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is well taken. I have brought it to the attention of hon. members before. From a procedural standpoint, we certainly do not appear to be operating according to the standard practice of the house. We have already had two questions of privilege which have been raised, and two motions which have been placed before the house. The hon. member took the floor on the third question of privilege, and we have had a debate since then on that, or I assume on the same question of privilege.

Now to answer the point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, there is not so much difference between this particular question of privilege and others raised earlier today that I can reach a different conclusion than that which I reached before, to the effect that there appears to be a prima facie case of privilege. This having been said, recognized and agreed, I wonder whether we can allow the debate to continue on something which we do not have before us: a motion. If the hon. member submits his motion we are in a position where we have three motions before us, and then perhaps we could discuss that.