

equal in the eyes of the courts of this land. There is a heavier duty, especially upon some of us who are officers of the court, to uphold the law. That may not be accepted by some but it happens to be a fact.

The second point that I want to re-emphasize is simply this: I am not talking about the rights and privileges of the hon. member across the way.

Mr. Kristiansen: Madam Speaker, a point of order.

Mr. Lawrence: I am not talking about the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Kristiansen). I am talking about my rights and privileges. If they also want me to talk about theirs, I shall be glad—

Mr. Kristiansen: A point of order.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry but there is another hon. member who is rising. Does the hon. member have a point of order?

Mr. Kristiansen: Madam Speaker, my point of order is this. The hon. member continues to go on about his special obligations and says that there is somehow a conflict between his role as an officer of the court and his role as a member of this House of Commons. If that is the case, there is always an opportunity available to him to decline one or the other, but in this House, in order for him to be able to claim a question of privilege, it must be his role as a member of the House of Commons which has been placed in dispute, not his capacity in any other realm. I happen to be a member of another organization and I owe loyalty to that organization. If I ever find myself in a position of conflict, I can resign my post here or resign my membership there. The hon. member has the same avenue open to him. I wish he would stop wasting our time, as his House leader said the other day.

An hon. Member: Right on.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lawrence: This is one of the points I was coming to. I cannot resign some of these positions. I cannot resign from my oath to the people and to the monarch of this country as far as being a Privy Councillor is concerned. I am sworn to uphold my oath. There may well be a conflict; that is the point I am making. But the conflict is not of my making whatsoever. There are other people in this House who are now caught in this bind. There is no question about that. But there is no way out of it. Until the Supreme Court of Canada clarifies the validity of the law of this land and the law that we are being forced to discuss and on which we will be forced to make a decision, I suggest that Your Honour should make a ruling that would somehow or other postpone or adjourn the hearings, the debates, the decision that affect so many of us in this House who are faced with this conflict.

That was going to be my summation to you, Madam Speaker, because it is a very special duty; there is no question but that it is a very special duty.

Privilege—Mr. Lawrence

I wonder if the actual terms of the decision of the Newfoundland court have been brought to your attention. If I may, just to emphasize to you the illegality and the lack of validity of the constitutional package that is before the House, I should like to quote a few particulars of that decision of the Newfoundland court which is the resolution—

● (1710)

Madam Speaker: In the interests of the business of the House, I would ask the hon. member not to do so. Whether I read the decision ten times or 50 times, and even if I were convinced and had the same opinion as the court of Newfoundland, it is not for me to decide whether what is going on here is legal or illegal, constitutional or unconstitutional. That is a decision the Chair must never take. It is really irrelevant to this question of privilege. Therefore, it is not necessary to quote it to me.

Mr. Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I hope you understand that I am not attempting to force you, by any means, to make an interpretation of the court's decision or give a legal decision with respect to the law of the land. What I wanted to do was to bring to your attention, in the most forceful language that I could use, the actual terms of the decision of the Newfoundland court—

An hon. Member: What about the Manitoba court?

Mr. Lawrence: —to point out to you that it is the law of the land. My friend across the aisle speaks about the Manitoba court. That decision is exactly the same with respect to the whole question of the validity of the resolution and is now before the Supreme Court of Canada. I did not intend to get into that language. If my hon. friends want me to, I can. It is a fact already that there is a question as to the validity of the constitutional package as far as the Manitoba decision, being brought to the Supreme Court, is concerned. But the existing law of the land today, here in the House of Commons at this hour on April 1, is such that it is the law of the land today. The constitutional resolution which forms the four questions before the Supreme Court of Canada is today the law of the land because, as far as we know, it is not being appealed by the only group which can appeal it, namely, the cabinet and the government of this country.

You have indicated that you do not desire me to go through the actual wording of the decisions. I will not do that, Madam Speaker. I do not know, however, how official notice can be drawn to your attention of the law of the land which forms an integral part of the three points that I feel are a burden upon me to prove to you concerning my rights and privileges. But if you desire not to hear the words nor to see them, that is your decision and, of course, I must abide by it. I must say to you that the decision is in very straightforward language. It is in very clear and unequivocal language. It is the law of the land which I am bound to uphold. Without being impertinent, Madam Speaker, I would say to you that you as well are bound to uphold that law by virtue of the various oaths you have taken during the course of your public life.