

*Privilege—Mr. Baldwin*

myself. I cannot believe that hon. members can resort to political pettiness, venom and vindictiveness in the manner which I have seen displayed here.

**An hon. Member:** Like you are doing.

**Mrs. Holt:** I am disturbed by the fact that people in the gallery are watching this kind of political plaything on such an important point of privilege. I am not sure that this is not a matter for the civil authorities and not a question of privilege of this House under citation 113 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition. I feel it is the right of every member to use the legal remedies open to every citizen, without members of this House compromising that right in any way by adding to and compounding the ridicule and the contempt. This is a basic right we all have.

I am presently involved in a lawsuit. It was a situation where I picked up the phone and said that I was going to proceed against them if, on the advice of my lawyer, I find out I had been slandered and maligned.

**An hon. Member:** After the publication.

**Mrs. Holt:** I have that right. As much as I believe in the freedom of the press, and even in the freedom of the bad press, I also have the right to challenge the press. If they are not accurate, I have that right. It is not open season on members of parliament.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs. Holt:** Some of us chose our job with great seriousness—

**An hon. Member:** All of us did.

**Mrs. Holt:** When we chose to enter this business and to serve our country, it did not give the media or any other person—neither my colleagues nor the opposition—the right to demean me. As far as my reputation is concerned, I am not in the public domain. I have built a reputation over many years, as has the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). Nobody has the right to malign me. This is a very important point and it should not be a political plaything, with people talking Liberal or Conservative or getting even with someone they happen not to like in this House.

My serving this country does not give everybody the right to attack me, nor does it give them the right to attack a minister. That minister and I have the right to phone a newspaper. The reason a Saskatoon newspaper would withdraw a story, just as a Vancouver newspaper did in my case, is because they know the truth about us and may be very nervous that they are indeed libelling or holding an individual up for contempt.

We are free citizens, just as the press must be free. I believe very strongly in a free press, even if it is a bad press. But I disagree heartily with the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) who said that the press might fear they are being inhibited. If they are being inhibited to be accurate, that is the greatest thing that can happen. In no way should any member

[Mrs. Holt.]

of this House share in the slander, the innuendo or the bad journalism which may be perpetuated here. Hon. members have contributed to it today; they have fed it and have shared in it. This may be a point of privilege, but I think it is not. We have a fundamental civil right to phone a newspaper and say that we have been slandered. I intend to pursue my lawsuit after being informed by a lawyer that I have one.

Citation 113 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition reads as follows:

Members often raise so-called "questions of privilege" . . . It should be dealt with by a motion—

**Mr. Speaker,** you are aware of all this. I would like to refer to the part which deals with insults and obstructions during debate, which reads as follows:

Libels upon members and aspersions upon them in relation to parliament and interference of any kind with their official duties, are breaches of the privileges of the members.

I suspect in that regard there may be a question of privilege.

**Mr. Hees:** The press gallery is filing out.

**Mrs. Holt:** I would like to jump one sentence in the quotation—

**An hon. Member:** Jump two, Simma.

**Mrs. Holt:** The citation continues:

An attack in a newspaper article is not a breach of privilege, unless it comes within the definition of privileges above given, and then a member is bound to lay on the table the newspaper in which the article complained of appears.

A member's effort to get redress in the civil arena has nothing to do with the procedure of this House. I would like to end my comments today by referring to a definition of some editorial writers. Some of the opposition may be of the same ilk. They are the people who come out of the woods after the battle to shoot the wounded.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. We have had a rather extensive contribution to this question of privilege. I know I will benefit greatly from the contributions yet to come. I would like to get us back to the point.

In so far as the motion of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) is concerned, there are many ingredients in it. That will have to be given some reflection because it has a rather wide-ranging suggestion containing reference to a deliberate attempt on the part of the government to affect or influence relationships with the press and the reporting of activities here. That will await contribution by the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Mr. Joyal) who inspired the motion.

I do not propose to be able to deal with that motion simply. However, there is one aspect with respect to it, and that is the article which appeared in the *Canadian* magazine over the weekend concerning the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). In so far as that point is concerned, we have certainly had a good deal of discussion. We have all agreed that it is the right of