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Chair: Mr. John Brassard



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• (1150)
[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC)): Members, we will now resume the meeting. Just as a reminder, we are now in public and in committee business.

I have a list of speakers. So far I have Mr. Barrett, Mr. Bains, Ms. Khalid and Mr. Villemure.

Does anybody else want to be on that list?

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): I'd like to raise a question of privilege, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Can you hang on? I'll come back to you in a second.

[Translation]

You are fourth on the list of speakers, Mr. Villemure.

[English]

Mr. Bains, I think you'll have to wait until you have the floor. I will just confirm that with the clerk. I've not dealt with a question of privilege at committee before, so just give me a second, please.

Mr. Bains, on the question of privilege, having not dealt with this before at committee, I need to determine what the reasons are for the question of privilege and an explanation of such. I cannot determine whether in fact there is a question of privilege to be determined. It is up to the Speaker of the House to determine that.

An hon. member: Perhaps I can add to that.

The Chair: Mr. Bains has the floor here.

Mr. Parm Bains: I can add to it.

I'd like to raise a question of privilege. It's in regard to statements that were made last week in the committee. I want to respond to some accusations that were made against me. The accusations were made in committee.

An hon. member: Chair, [Inaudible—Editor] the floor.

The Chair: Just hang on, Michael, please.

Is it a question of privilege or a point of order that you're raising?

Mr. Parm Bains: It's a question of privilege.

The Chair: Okay. Just bear with me again.

An hon. member: Can you suspend while you—

The Chair: Yes. I'm going to suspend.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Chair, if I may add before you suspend—

The Chair: No. To be fair, I have not dealt with this before.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I just want to help the clerk out. That's all.

The Chair: Well, the clerk, I'm sure, doesn't need the help.

I will suspend for a few minutes, because I want to be better prepared on how to deal with this. I think it's incumbent upon me as chair to make sure we do the right thing here, not having experienced this in the past.

I'm going to suspend.

• (1150) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1200)

The Chair: I appreciate the patience of the committee. Not having dealt with this matter before, I want to be very sure that, from a procedural standpoint, we're doing all the correct things.

Mr. Bains, when we left, you raised your hand on a question of privilege. I'm going to allow you to state what you believe the question of privilege is.

If you want to go ahead, please do.

Mr. Parm Bains: Thank you.

As I stated, I'm raising a question of privilege with regard to statements made last week in committee. I want to respond to some of the accusations that have been made in the committee. I'd like for the committee to decide if it should go to the Speaker of the House.

Page 57 of the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* describes parliamentary privilege as follows:

the rights and immunities that are deemed necessary for the House of Commons, as an institution, and its members, as representatives of the electorate, to fulfill their functions.

Page 88 outlines that:

Members individually have the responsibility to not abuse their rights and immunities, particularly freedom of speech.

On page 112, a quote from Speaker Fraser in 1987 says:

The privileges of a Member are violated by any action which might impede him or her in the fulfilment of his or her duties and functions. It is obvious that the unjust damaging of a reputation could constitute such an impediment.

Furthermore, Mr. Chair, on page 619 it states:

Remarks which question a Member's integrity, honesty or character are not in order. A Member will be requested to withdraw offensive remarks, allegations, or accusations of impropriety directed towards another Member.

During our last meeting, Mr. Brock made false claims and allegations of collusion towards me in an effort to intimidate and bully me and to impede my work as a member of Parliament. This raises a prima facie case of intimidation and threat to my reputation.

In 2021 I was approached by members of the community and encouraged to run for office. I'm very honoured to be representing the people of Steveston—Richmond East. I stood for office to speak to my values and my vision for Canada. I was elected by the community where I've lived my entire life, because they know me and they trust me. They know I can represent them here in Canada's Parliament. I ran to help build a better Richmond, a better B.C. and a better Canada for present and future generations, with things like building trade links, greening the economy and improving government efficiency.

That was one of the key reasons I chose—I think I was one of two people who chose—to sit on the mighty OGGO committee. I know other members sit on the committee with me. It was to improve the management of taxpayer dollars. I was motivated at the time to do a spending review and apply it to how taxpayer funds are used by departments, but also here on Parliament Hill, to find savings without impacting services on programs by closing loopholes.

I say that sincerely, Mr. Chair. This was the spirit behind the motion that I tried to raise at the last committee meeting. I gave notice on Friday, May 17 of a motion to study a clear abuse of taxpayer dollars, in this case committed by dozens of members of the Conservative caucus, including the members opposite.

However, last week Mr. Brock filibustered his own motion and abused his parliamentary privilege to issue a flurry of allegations against me, intended to intimidate, impede and commit character assassination rather than accept the slightest measure of accountability for his personal and unethical actions, and to avoid voting on an issue that would place him and others in a clear conflict of interest.

Having known about Mr. Chiu's claims for three years, the member opposite had plenty of opportunities to bring this motion forward. Only when I, in the course of carrying out my work as an MP, attempted to shed light on a spending loophole and a potential unethical abuse of taxpayer dollars did he come forward with these accusations.

Mr. Chair, I think you can also attest to my participation in this committee. I try to work with everyone. I try to be non-partisan as much as possible. I work honestly and try to get to the heart of the matter in all the issues that we raise in this important committee.

The timing of their motion confirms that it has been made in bad faith, motivated purely by partisanship and malicious intent.

• (1205)

Mr. Brock's accusations.... The attacks were not aimed just at me but also at Justice Hogue and her findings. When he repeats the falsehood that "They"—the CCP—"got the outcome they wanted: They got the Liberal government in power again," these statements couldn't clash more with Justice Hogue's findings.

The report indicated clearly that Canada's electoral system "remains...sound". The evidence shows that foreign interference did not impact the integrity of Canada's electoral system in 2019 and 2021. Justice Hogue also said that none of "the evidence [she's] heard to date" suggests that officials acted in "bad faith", yet this is what Mr. Brock accused me of.

These findings hold with what Mr. Chiu said at the committee last year. He made no accusations of my being involved. He only went so far as to allege that I benefited from the supposed interference, and now he himself is also changing the story. He actually went on the radio during his many interviews after losing, especially on CKNW, and said that he knows about the work I've done in the community and that he knows me to be a good man.

Ironically, while at committee, my former opponent engaged in the very conduct that he and Mr. Brock indict me and accuse me of: impropriety in doing nothing to counter, and even purposely spreading, CCP misinformation and disinformation. Specifically, Mr. Chiu now claims, as part of his evidence, that I labelled his bill and his leader as racist and that I was spreading CCP misinformation. It's an attempt to damage my reputation and, quite frankly, to try to bully me.

This is a lie. I never spoke about Mr. Chiu during the election. I didn't have to. I spoke about myself. I was raised in Richmond. I'm a local guy, a local community guy. I don't work against people; I work around them. I only talked about myself and what I could do.

On the matter of the registry, I said that I couldn't support something that is viewed to be discriminatory, and this was during a wave of anti-Asian hate. You all recall that this was a post-COVID time when anti-Asian hate was on the rise. In the city of Richmond specifically, there was a case in which a hot coffee was spilled, and it was well known, documented across Canada or covered across Canada. A hot coffee was spilled on an elderly Chinese lady. That case went to court, and it was proved to be a hate crime. This was happening at the same time. Having been through.... At the same time, many members of the community came to me and said that no one ever stands with them, including Mr. Chiu. I never mentioned his name, but they told me that Mr. Chiu and other leaders in the community don't stand with them and don't help them.

Having been through the report, and assuming that Justice Hogue examined the 2021 Steveston—Richmond East election in some detail, I know of no such conclusions made by Justice Hogue that match the ones made in the sensationalist and fundamentally false statements made by Mr. Brock in the committee last week.

After three years of Mr. Chiu making his claims, including numerous appearances at committees on the inquiry, where he reluctantly admitted to not collecting or retaining any of the supposed evidence from the election—he also said that CSIS never got back to him and that the RCMP never got back to him—as well as over 10 months of investigations by Johnston and Hogue, nothing in the way of serious evidence has emerged.

This is why the statements in the report referring to Steveston—Richmond East are qualified with “could” and “possibly”. While I may not be a lawyer, I can be certain that if the member opposite—we know he’s a very experienced litigator; he’s told us many times—walked into the chambers and told the judge that they needed to convict somebody based on “could” and “maybe” and “possibly”, I think he knows that the result would be that he’d be sent out very quickly.

The fact is that serious claims require serious evidence, and neither Mr. Chiu nor Mr. Brock has been able to provide even ordinary evidence to support their very serious claims.

This case is not without precedent, as evidenced by a decision of Speaker Milliken in November 2010. In response to a point of order raised by the member for Scarborough—Rouge River about a negative attack delivered by the member for Brant against the member for Ajax—Pickering, the Speaker found that this violated parliamentary procedure and previous rulings of the Speaker.

• (1210)

Speaker Milliken concluded that:

For all of these reasons, after careful review of the Statement of the member for Brant, the Chair finds that it constituted a personal attack on the member for Ajax—Pickering and that it was an inappropriate use of a statement made pursuant to Standing Order 31. Therefore, I call upon the member for Brant to withdraw his comments.

It’s clear, Mr. Chair, that personal attacks against members are out of order and should not be allowed to proceed. However, if Mr. Brock is looking for evidence of intimidation and disregard of the Chinese community, he needs to look no further than the previous government. I think I’ve made these comments before as well. Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper approved CCP police officers coming onto Canadian soil and allowed them to police their community here, ultimately through intimidation, and repatriate Chinese Canadians back to their home country, striking fear into the heart of the community. This happened. The Conservatives did this to curry favour with the dictatorship in Beijing at the time, which they now claim to oppose.

I do believe the registry has merit. I’ll make some comments on that.

We heard from Mr. Stanton, a former CSIS executive manager, that they are also limited, as they cannot target the proxies. I proactively reached out to CSIS after the election, and I said, “Hey, I need your help. I want to know a bit more about these issues that

have been coming up.” They also said that the registry doesn’t have teeth and doesn’t address the issue of the proxy.

Instead, Mr. Stanton recommended that Parliament focus more on the Security of Information Act as the best way to tackle foreign interference, and this has been a focus of mine during my time as an MP. I also collaborated with MP Dhaliwal on drafting motion M-112 to combat foreign intimidation against diaspora communities, which recently passed unanimously in the House of Commons.

Rather than simply imposing a reactionary tool to address foreign interference and expecting it to fix the problem, Bill C-70 has also been put forward to modernize Canada’s security establishment, and I’ll be speaking on that as well. It will more actively pursue foreign actors bent on causing harm to Canadians.

We’re dealing with misinformation and disinformation. It’s information, and the focus should be on the security of information. My former opponent also claimed I was spreading misinformation and misleading voters by saying that the Conservative Party would eliminate the assault rifle ban if elected, but this was not misinformation; this was actually part of the CPC platform.

At the same time, Mr. Chiu was actively spreading misinformation by disseminating actual flyers. I never spoke about Mr. Chiu, as I mentioned earlier, throughout the whole campaign. I never said his name once, and I didn’t talk about him; I didn’t have to. He actually handed out flyers saying I was going to legalize hard drugs in Richmond. This was not part of the 2021 Liberal Party platform, nor is it the law of the land today.

Rather, Mr. Brock and the CPC have been sitting on their hands while claims of foreign interference run rife in the Conservative Party. I think I’ve raised some of these issues before as well. Mr. Brock frequently made reference to former leader Erin O’Toole’s claims that up to eight ridings were affected by foreign interference in the 2021 election, but Mr. Brock doesn’t seem to think Mr. O’Toole’s recent claims of interference by the government in China contributed to his being ousted as the leader of the Conservative Party. Mr. O’Toole even suggests that a CPC member and former member of the CPC’s national council, Bert Chen, who was suspended from the party’s national council after launching the petition to recall O’Toole as leader, was involved.

It gets worse: More than 100 Iranian Canadians sent a letter to Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre on Tuesday, calling for an investigation of the party’s handling of allegations—

• (1215)

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): I have a point of order, Chair.

Mr. Bains, in his meandering offering, is talking about things that have actually occurred since the meeting in which he claims the offence against his privilege was taken.

Mr. Parm Bains: I believe this is all relevant to the conversation.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I'm sure he believes it's relevant, but Chair—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'm not sure specifically which point of order he's referring to from the Standing Orders, Chair.

• (1220)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Relevance is the first thing, Chair—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: On a question of privilege, Chair—

The Chair: Ms. Khalid, can you hang on, please?

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett. I think I got your point, and I actually got on the microphone almost at the same time you did.

Mr. Michael Barrett: The Speaker of the House, Chair, has also, in practice, limited the length of time for questions of privilege raised in the chamber. Having done that, the scope for members offering their points has to be very tight. The Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Assistant Deputy Speaker have sat members down when they've turned it into a soapbox.

The Chair: I got that point, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Parm Bains: I'll tighten it up, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Bains, I was going to make the point that your question of privilege needs to relate to the issue of your feeling like your privilege has been breached.

Mr. Parm Bains: I am giving a comparison here.

The Chair: That's fine, but in relation to what you're talking about, it has to be germane to that.

Mr. Parm Bains: Okay.

The Chair: What I'm not looking for in making my ruling on whether I think your privilege has been breached is to relitigate the issues that have been before this committee in the past.

I will remind you, sir, that Mr. Chiu's testimony is a matter of privilege. He's covered by parliamentary privilege in this room. I'm going to ask you to keep it succinct as it relates to your feeling like your privilege has been breached, not to relitigate or debate what's happened either in the past or in this committee with witnesses.

Please go ahead, sir. If you can be succinct and wrap it up, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Parm Bains: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will. I'm almost there.

As I indicated, I was just showing a comparison of some of the points that have been raised here and are chosen to be viewed differently if it's one side of the equation here versus the other. I just was raising some of those issues as a comparison to really shed light on what takes place here and how I am feeling. I just feel that neither Mr. Brock nor any of the other CPC MPs seem to treat these claims with certainty—

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Again, with respect to your ruling, Chair, requesting that the member be succinct and speak exactly to how his privileges were breached, what he's offering is opinion on perceptions of members of another party about issues in the news. I fail to see how what I

think about something or how I treat something—for example, foreign interference—has anything to do with his claims that another member of this committee...or that his privileges were breached. If he has a specific allegation with respect to that—

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Brock made accusations against me. I'm speaking to that.

The Chair: I'm not asking for cross discussion here, please.

Mr. Michael Barrett: If the member—

The Chair: Wrap it up.

Mr. Michael Barrett: —has something specific that relates to his privilege being breached, he should cite the event and cite the evidence, and then the chair needs to make a ruling.

Chair, this is gratuitous at best.

The Chair: Mr. Bains, Mr. Barrett does bring up a good point.

We are all experienced members of Parliament. We have seen questions of privilege being raised in the House of Commons. In fact, I have raised several questions of privilege in my experience as a House leader. Most of those, many of those, all of those questions of privilege are related to how the privileges of members have been breached. There are very specific references not just to the historical context but also, under the green book, to how those privileges have been breached. Never have I stood in the House on a question of privilege and litigated what's gone on at this committee or what's been the subject of news sources outside of this committee.

I am going to ask you to conclude.

Mr. Parm Bains: I will conclude.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bains.

Mr. Bains has concluded his discussion.

Mr. Parm Bains: No. I will give you a conclusion here.

The Chair: I'm sorry. That's my misunderstanding.

I'm going to ask you to wrap it up really quickly. If there's another intervention by me, then—

• (1225)

Mr. Parm Bains: I believe I've already made several references to the allegations made by Mr. Brock.

To conclude, Mr. Brock's motion is clearly designed as a personal threat. It's intended to inflict reputational damage, intimidate me using false or unverifiable information, and impede me in my role as a member of the House of Commons.

Making statements against members without evidence or making false allegations is a matter of serious concern for all members, and I look forward to your ruling, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you for raising that question of privilege, Mr. Bains. The chair does take it seriously.

I see your hand, Mr. Kurek. Do you have anything to add in relation to this question of privilege?

I'm going to remind members that I'm not interested in debate.

On a point of order, go ahead, Mr. Kurek.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): I'm sorry, Chair. Before entering into a discussion, I would ask for clarity from you on the framework of privilege discussions at committee. If you need to take time to discuss it with the clerk, I respect that, absolutely.

It's on a point of order, so that we can understand what the framework for a discussion continuing would or would not look like and whether we would expect a ruling from you and whether or not there is a motion forthcoming.

I note that Mr. Bains has given up the floor without having moved a motion. I believe I'm next on the speaking list.

I would just ask for clarity, Chair, on a point of order, before we proceed with the question.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: I appreciate your bringing that up, Mr. Kurek.

I have heard the information that's been provided by Mr. Bains. I will advise the committee that the chair takes very seriously these issues of questions of privilege.

Similarly to what the Speaker of the House has done, I will take the information. I am going to go back and discuss this with the clerk and come back with a later ruling. That's what I'm prepared to do at this point.

Thank you for raising that, Mr. Bains.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'm sorry. I'm just seeking clarification, Chair. What does that mean?

The Chair: It means I'm going to come back with a ruling on the question of privilege once I look at all of the information that's been presented by Mr. Bains, other information as it relates to what's in the book, and some of the discussion that went on in the past.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Do you mean in a few minutes?

He has to come back now.

The Chair: For clarity, it's not I who am going to determine whether there is a question of privilege here. It's only the Speaker who can decide that. What will happen once I come back and determine whether, in fact, I believe that a prima facie question of privilege is to be found here, is that there would be a motion of the committee to proceed and prepare this for the Speaker of the House. That's how the process would work.

At this point, I am not prepared to make a ruling. I'm going to go back and deliberate with the clerk. I will come back to the committee, not within the time period that's prescribed here, but at a later date as well.

If you have a point of order, then go ahead, Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thanks, Chair.

My understanding from the green book and from our Standing Orders is that:

The role of the Chair in such instances is to determine whether the matter raised does in fact touch on privilege and is not a point of order, a grievance or a matter of debate. If the Chair is of the opinion that the Member's interjection deals with a point of order, a grievance or a matter of debate, or that the incident is within the powers of the committee to deal with, the Chair will rule accordingly giving reasons. The committee cannot then consider the matter further as a question of privilege. Should a Member disagree with the Chair's decision, the Member can appeal the decision to the committee (i.e., move a motion "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?"). The committee may sustain or overturn the Chair's decision.

The committee can then sustain that decision.

I really would encourage that we come to a conclusion on this sooner rather than later, Chair, as is the precedent set by previous chairs.

● (1230)

The Chair: Okay, I appreciate that. I appreciate the information you have provided.

It's also my understanding, Ms. Khalid—and I've confirmed this—that I can take my time to deliberate on this issue. That is what I am prepared to do, given the seriousness of what Mr. Bains has brought up.

I don't have to make a decision right away. That's very clear to me, and I'm not prepared to make a decision at this point. I'm going to come back to the committee in due course after I consult with the clerk. As I indicated earlier, that will not be today.

That's my decision.

On a point of order, go ahead, Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I would ask you to consult with the clerk as to whether you have the right to go away and make a decision on this. This decision, according to the green book, has to be made today, so that Mr. Bains knows whether he will or will not be able to move a motion.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): On what page was that, on the decision?

The Chair: Mr. Brock, Mr. Fisher has the floor.

I am pretty sure that I've already looked into this, and I am certain that no decision has to be made today, that I can come back to the committee. I'm certain of that, Mr. Fisher.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Chair, I have something on the same point of order.

If we can perhaps have a decision as to whether this matter presented to you is a matter of privilege or not, then you can rule on it at a later time.

The Chair: Well, herein lies the difficulty, as I explained earlier. I am not sure whether it constitutes a matter of privilege. I think it's unfair for that expectation to be placed on me.

When we deal with questions of privilege in the House, often-times the Speaker will bring information back, will go back and seek information, either from the clerk or the law clerks, to determine whether it's a question of privilege or not.

If you're asking me to make a decision today, I think, first and foremost, that I don't have to make that decision. Second, I can go back and consult with the clerk and others on whether, in fact, I believe this is a question of privilege. If I do believe that, then I come to the committee, I make that decision, and the committee can move forward in a proper manner. If I decide that it's not a question of privilege, then the committee can move back in a proper format and manner.

I am not prepared at this point, nor do I believe I have to be prepared, to decide on the question of privilege that Mr. Bains has raised.

Go ahead, Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Chair.

You are right; you aren't asked to judge whether this is a question of privilege. You're not asked to come back at a later date to determine whether this is a question of privilege. You are, however, asked to determine today whether it touches on privilege. That's all the chair's role is, to determine whether this touches on privilege.

The Chair: Yes, and I think I've already explained myself in that regard. Exactly what you're saying is what I realize and what I understand. If I do determine—and I'm not prepared to deal with that today or determine that today, given the seriousness of the nature of what Mr. Bains has brought up—then I can come back and say at a later point whether I do or don't believe this touches on a question of privilege. Then it will be up to the committee to determine what it wants to do at that point, whether it wants to raise it to the House and then eventually to the Speaker for him to determine.

I understand my responsibility. As much as I understand my responsibility, the option I'm choosing, given the serious nature of this, is to not determine at this point whether it raises a question of privilege or not.

I have to go back to consult with the clerks. I'm going to consult with parliamentary law clerks and then come back and give my determination at that point.

Go ahead, Mr. Kurek, on a point of order.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Just to ensure there is absolute clarity, when it comes to chapter 20, with the subheading “Questions of Privilege in Committee”, it does not, in fact, say that a ruling is required today. Just for those watching and for the edification of all committee members, Bosc and Gagnon's book is very clear that there is not a time limit, although, of course, the reasonable expectation is that it be done expeditiously, and I think we all appreciate that.

I would conclude with this and simply say that I find it troubling that the governing party—

The Chair: Watch on debate.

Mr. Damien Kurek: —would push for a decision, which certainly—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kurek.

Mr. Damien Kurek: —I think, underlies motives that seem to be nothing more than purely political.

• (1235)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kurek.

I'm quite clear on the fact that no decision has to be made today and the chair can take his time or her time to render a decision to the committee.

On the same point of order, go ahead, Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you, Chair.

On page 623 of the book, it reads:

The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all Members. Thus, the use of offensive, provocative or threatening language in the House is strictly forbidden. Personal attacks, insults and obscenities are not in order.

I think, based on what I've heard today, those are exactly the rules that have been broken, so, Chair—

Mr. Michael Barrett: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Barrett—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —I challenge your ruling.

An hon. member: He didn't make a ruling.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Yes, he did.

The Chair: Hold on a second. My ruling is that I am going to come back to the committee, which I think is the prudent and pragmatic thing to do.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: You're challenging my ruling on coming back to the committee so that I can look at this in a fair manner and make a proper decision. Is that what you're challenging me on, Ms. Khalid, seriously?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Chair, I am challenging the integrity and the decisions that have been made, how much abuse members of this committee have taken based on the actions of—

The Chair: Well, that's subject to your opinion.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: It is not subject to opinion, Chair—that's the whole point of it. That is what the green book, that is what our Standing Orders—

The Chair: However, it's not your question of privilege, Ms. Khalid—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —are telling you, Chair, to do.

The Chair: I'm not determining whether you have—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Chair, you are under obligation to make sure that our committee functions in an effective way—

The Chair: I'm not going to argue with you on this.

There is no decision to challenge, because the decision that I'm dealing with is on the question of privilege. I have told the committee that I'm taking this matter seriously and that I'm going to come back to the committee with a determination after I look at all the evidence, including some of the accusations that have been made. I think it's fair and prudent on my part to do that.

I don't think you have anything to challenge, Ms. Khalid, to be frank.

I'm going to come back to the committee. That's my decision.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Can I make one more point of order, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Darren Fisher: You're going to go away and come back to determine whether you feel this touches on privilege.

The Chair: My responsibility is to determine whether, in fact, I think Mr. Bains has a valid point and his privileges were in fact violated, and then I make a recommendation to the committee. Then it's up to the committee to determine whether, in fact, they're going to move forward with this and bring this to the House, in front of the Speaker, for the ultimate determination. That's how the process works.

I'm prepared to do that—not today, but at the earliest opportunity, which will give me some time to consult with the law clerks to determine whether, in fact, this touches on parliamentary privilege.

I see Mr. Bains on a point of order.

Mr. Parm Bains: Just on this, can you then set a timeline to make a determination?

The Chair: It's at the earliest opportunity. I'm not sure the Speaker even sets a timeline when he deals with questions of privilege.

Let me do my work. Let me consult with the law clerks, and then I'll come back and make a decision. That could be by Thursday, at the earliest. I'm taking this matter seriously, and I'm going to deal with it with the seriousness in which it's raised.

Is that okay? Thank you.

Now that we've dealt with that, I'm just going to remind committee members that we are back on committee business.

Ms. Khalid, you have another point of order.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you. My point of order refers specifically to chapter 13 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, on Standing Order 18, and on Standing Order 116(1). It is in relation to actions that Mr. Brock, on this committee, took against me last week in putting out a public statement that put me in jeopardy and created a lot of negative angst towards me. I believe that it violates the Standing Orders that have been laid out with respect to how parliamentarians are supposed to conduct themselves in the House and at committee.

This is not the first time this has been done, but I would hope this is the last time it is done.

I'm more than happy, Chair, to start reading to you what's—

• (1240)

The Chair: Ms. Khalid, I'm going to stop you there, because I'm not sure whether it.... Was it related to committee business?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Indeed, it was, Mr. Chair. It was very much related to committee business, where Mr. Brock filibustered the motion—

The Chair: Was it in the meeting itself? That's where I have to be clear.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Yes, it was.

The Chair: Go ahead on a point of order, Mr. Kurek.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I believe that it's not a point of order that was raised.

Mr. Chair, I would encourage you to follow the speaking list, because that certainly sounds like a substantive item of debate.

If Ms. Khalid wants to move a motion accordingly, she is welcome to.

The Chair: Ms. Khalid did bring up a point of order.

Go ahead on your point of order, Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I have not finished speaking to my point of order. I would like to outline exactly what happened that helped violate the rules that I have pointed out, which are Standing Order 18 and Standing Order 116(1)—

The Chair: If you feel that way, would you not want to raise a question of privilege, then, similar to what Mr. Bains did?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I am raising a point of order because clearly, Mr. Chair, you're going to take a while to rule on any questions of privilege.

Mr. Michael Barrett: It's not a point of order if it didn't happen in the meeting. She's talking about Twitter—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Sure. Do you know what?

I will be more than happy to raise a question of privilege in that case then.

The Chair: We have another question of privilege being brought up by Ms. Khalid.

If you want to go ahead, Ms. Khalid, on your question of privilege, please do.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Absolutely, Mr. Chair.

Last week, which was May 21, I believe, during committee, Mr. Brock put out a tweet that said, "Disrespect in ethics committee! The level of disrespect from [Iqra Khalid] during committee is beyond words. Her back is literally turned towards committee members. Disgraceful."

My understanding of the Standing Orders and the rules of House procedure is that this tweet violates my privilege, Mr. Chair. I will show you exactly how. I will read to you some of the emails I have received. I will talk to you about some of the phone calls I have received—

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: No. Please don't interrupt my privilege here—

The Chair: Bear with me, please.

I'm going to suspend for a minute.

Thank you.

• (1240) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1300)

The Chair: I will call the meeting back to order. I appreciate everyone's patience.

When we left off, we were on Ms. Khalid's question of privilege. I will ask her to continue, but I will ask this, similar to what I asked of Mr. Bains: A question of privilege should be as succinct as it needs to be in relation to the privileges of the member being violated.

Ms. Khalid, I know that you mentioned something about a Twitter post from last week that occurred.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: I'm going to say this with respect: I'm not interested in becoming the Twitter police.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Chair, no. No. Do you know what? Point—

The Chair: Let me explain.

If you have an issue with the actions of a member who you feel violated your privilege, then I'm asking you to state specifically where that violation occurred. The outside circumstances or the opinions of others do not matter to this committee. What matters is whether a member feels like their privileges have been violated.

I'll remind members as well, and I'm reminding you, Ms. Khalid, that anything that happens outside of this committee, whether it's a social media post or otherwise, is a matter that can be taken up by the Speaker of the House of Commons. We have seen in the past that points of order or questions of privilege have been raised in the House of Commons, and the Speaker has in some circumstances ruled on those.

Any form of litigation related to this, any Twitter messages...because, look, speaking frankly to the committee, we can go down a very deep rabbit hole on the issue of Twitter.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: On a point of order, Chair, I'm not sure why you're litigating this matter. I would like to speak to what I have experienced—

The Chair: I'm explaining, again, where my position is, but I—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —based on the actions of committee members.

The Chair: Right. So explain the actions. That's the point I'm making.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'm absolutely trying to do that, Chair, but you're—

The Chair: Ms. Khalid, respectfully, I don't want to be the Twitter police. I don't want to be a determining factor, or the determinant, of what's appropriate or what's not. We can do that in relation to what a member's action is, but I'm not interested in some numbered Twitter feed of what they're saying.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That's exactly what I'm trying to speak to, Chair. That is exactly what I'm trying to speak to.

The Chair: I'm going to allow you to continue, with that expectation. Go ahead.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Chair, all I want is an apology by a member of this committee for putting my safety and security in jeopardy. That is all I am asking.

I can tell you how much hate I have received on social media. I can read it into the record—how many emails I have received, how many phone calls, people calling me and telling me that I'm a “fucking cunt” because a member feels that I turned my back to him.

I am just trying to look out for myself, Chair. I am trying to look out for my safety.

The Chair: Ms. Khalid—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: No, Chair. No. You have talked over me and over me and over me. All I am looking for is an apology.

The Chair: I'm going to ask you to use appropriate language, that's all.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I am looking for a deletion of that tweet. That is all I am asking for, Chair.

The Chair: So can I ask why we are utilizing committee time? If you have a problem with what Mr. Brock said, you can approach Mr. Brock.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Respectfully, Chair, I don't believe that is possible when the actions that are highlighted on social media during committee by members have severe consequences for somebody like me.

I'm sorry, Chair. I am not a terrorist. I am not a “cunt”.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I am not the hundred gazillion things that I get called on a daily basis—

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: We don't need to hear that.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —because my colleague's put me in that position, Chair.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Just hang on a second.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Can you please stop cutting me off?

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I am trying—

The Chair: I'm asking for some decorum.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I am trying very hard, Chair—

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —to get my viewpoint across here—

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —to raise a very serious concern—

• (1305)

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Just hang on, Michael. I hear your point of order.

Ms. Khalid, I'm going to ask—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Why do I—

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Why am I the only person in this room who keeps getting cut off here, Chair?

The Chair: I'm not; he has a point of order.

I'm going to go to Mr. Barrett on a point of order, similar to what I do with you when you raise a point of order.

I would ask, for the sake of the interpretation, that we not cut each other off. Okay?

Mr. Barrett, go ahead on your point of order, please.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, the member is citing correspondence and calls that are not from a member of this committee and were not solicited or invited by a member of this committee.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I disagree with that.

That is a point of debate, Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Barrett—

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, no. It is—

The Chair: I hear your point, sir.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: These calls came strictly from a tweet from that member—

Mr. Michael Barrett: This is, again, gratuitous. This has nothing to do—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: —while the committee was still occurring.

No, Chair—

Mr. Michael Barrett: This has nothing to do with my colleague.

The Chair: Ms. Khalid, please....

Mr. Michael Barrett: This has nothing to do with my colleague.

The Chair: Mr. Barrett—

Mr. Michael Barrett: This has nothing to do with my colleague.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Cut him off, too, Chair.

The Chair: I am.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Why is it always me?

The Chair: I can't have screaming across the table.

Mr. Michael Barrett: This has nothing to do with my colleague.

The Chair: I can't have screaming across the table.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'm not screaming, Chair.

The Chair: For the sake—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That's a very gender-biased statement to make.

The Chair: Well, I can't have loud voices—

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, Mr. Fisher and Ms. Khalid both interrupted me while I was on a point of order.

The Chair: Okay. Hang on a second with your thoughts, Mr. Barrett.

I've heard both points of order. I've heard Ms. Khalid's question of privilege—

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, you did not hear Ms. Khalid's question of privilege. She did not get to speak to her question of privilege. She was continuously cut off by the chair and members with points of order.

The Chair: I think she made her point.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Respectfully, she did not get a chance, Mr. Chair, to make her point about dangerous incidents directed at that member because of another member of this committee's comments inviting those people.

Mr. Michael Barrett: No. That didn't happen. That actually didn't happen.

The Chair: I am not happy with the way this meeting is going—

Mr. Michael Barrett: That didn't happen.

The Chair: I am adjourning the meeting.

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