



① 5.46pm

## Mr Clive Betts >

(Sheffield South East) (Lab)

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On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Thank you for this opportunity to raise a point of order about a serious incident affecting my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mohammad Yasin) on a Select Committee visit to Canada last week.

On checking in for their flight at Heathrow, all Committee members got through except my hon. Friend, who was delayed for questioning for a considerable period. He was told that this was because his name is Mohammad. He was asked whether he was carrying a knife or other offensive weapon; he was also asked where he was born. The questioning was undertaken by officials from Air Canada and, we believe, the Canadian Government, despite my hon. Friend having already been given a visa to enter Canada. After proving that he was an MP, with help from our Committee Clerk, he was eventually allowed through. At Montreal airport, the same issues were raised by Canadian immigration. At Toronto airport on the way back, my hon. Friend was again challenged. He got on his flight with assistance from our consul general, who was very helpful.

My hon. Friend has received apologies from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Canadian Minister for Immigration and from Air Canada. However, given the racist and Islamophobic nature of these challenges, I believe that as well as writing to the Canadian high commissioner, which I will do, it is important to put these concerns on the parliamentary record. It was completely unacceptable for a Member of this House to be treated in this way. Because he was an MP, my hon. Friend was allowed on his flights; if, however, one of our constituents had been so challenged, they might have been refused.

We raised the issue with our high commissioner in Ottawa, who was very supportive. She was amazed at what had happened, given the multicultural nature of Canada as an open and welcoming country. She has raised the matter with the Canadian Government and appreciates that I am raising it in Parliament, to try to ensure that no one is treated in this way in future. I look forward to any help that you can give in this matter, Mr Deputy Speaker.

## Mr Deputy Speaker >

(Sir Roger Gale)

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I thank the hon. Member for his point of order and for giving me advance notice of it. I am sure that the whole House shares his dismay at the treatment of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mohammad Yasin). It is wholly unacceptable under any circumstances, but it is particularly concerning when it occurs, as it did, in the course of official travel on parliamentary business. The hon. Member for Sheffield South East (Mr Betts) is absolutely right to put his concerns on the record. I am sure that Ministers on the Treasury Bench will also have noted his comments.

## Dame Diana Johnson >

(Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)

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On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Today, after I had asked for a statement from the Paymaster General on the recently announced delay to the infected blood inquiry's final report, a short, 193-word statement has been laid by the Government. That number is in stark contrast to the 485 people who are estimated to have died since the inquiry started, with one person dying every four days on average. The short statement failed to deal with the final recommendations made already by Sir Brian Langstaff for making interim payments, for which there is now an even stronger case because of the delay to his final report. There was no detail on progress to establish a compensation scheme, as has also already been recommended by Sir Brian Langstaff, and no explanation of why contaminated blood victims are being treated differently from victims of the Horizon scandal, who are already going to receive £600,000 in compensation before that final report is produced. What more can I do, Mr Deputy Speaker, to get the Government to deal with this matter in a timely way, and to ensure that as much information as possible is disclosed and that these people are shown some compassion?

## Mr Deputy Speaker >

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I appreciate the right hon. Lady's concerns, but she in turn will understand that that is not a matter for the Chair; it is a matter for the Government. However, as before, I am sure that her remarks will have been heard by those on the Government Front Bench.

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