

raised and I undertook to the House that I would, as they say here, look at the "blues"; in other words review *Hansard* and also the electronic *Hansard*.

This morning when asked by the opposition House leader I reported that I had reviewed both *Hansard* and the broadcast tape and neither lend any support to the claim or the allegation that the right hon. the Prime Minister used unparliamentary language. This morning the hon. government House leader asserted the view that the right hon. Prime Minister did not utter the words that had been attributed to him.

I ask hon. members to listen carefully because I am rendering a procedural decision. There is a dispute as to what happened. There have been statements made outside the House of which I am aware, but as is our tradition the Speaker cannot and should not make any ruling based on comments outside the House or in media reports.

In a situation like this, which is not easy, the first condition is: Did the Speaker hear words or a phrase of an unparliamentary nature? I have to say to all hon. members that the first condition was not met yesterday as the Chair did not hear the alleged utterance.

Hon. members will say: "Well, why didn't the Chair hear it?" The Chair cannot hear all comments made in the Chamber. All hon. members, I am sure, can accept that and know that.

The second condition if the Chair has not heard the words complained of is to verify our records to establish if they are reported by *Hansard* or audible on the recording.

Having done so there is no supporting entry in *Hansard*, nor does the electronic *Hansard* demonstrate that an offending phrase was used by the right hon. Prime Minister.

**An hon. member:** How about if I heard it?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not a helpful suggestion at this point. I really would ask hon. members to refrain from making comments like that.

I suggest to the House that is where we are now. I am asking hon. members to listen carefully. That is where we are now. I suggest to the House that the Chair can go no further. I have done what I was requested to do and I have reported on it. The Speaker has no power to

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compel any member's attendance nor can I force any member to make a statement.

I want it clearly understood that some weeks ago on an unhappy day when a member was brought to the bar of this place, it was not done so by the order of the Speaker. It was done so by the order of this House after debate. There is a distinction.

The Chair is faced with a dispute and is unable to resolve it. When the official records are not supportive of the allegations, I am convinced that it is not the duty of the Chair to try to resolve it.

As far as I am concerned from a procedural point of view and in keeping with our conventions the matter is closed.

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the important parliamentary decision. You indicate that neither the Speaker nor the video nor the sound records nor the *Hansard* monitors sitting a few feet away from me support the allegations imputed. The reason for that is because what you have just indicated is entirely consistent with the facts of yesterday.

That is why it is as it is. That being said, I have always taken the position in this House that any offence, real or imagined, deliberate or inadvertent, that might cause the Chair any difficulty of any kind is something that I as Prime Minister ought to be the first to respond to. I always have sought to do that and I do so again today.

I would say to the Speaker and to all hon. members of the House that I concur fully with the judgment of the Speaker and the reasons that he has given. They will search in vain for the offending phrase because it does not exist. That having been said, I convey to the Speaker my regrets for any inconvenience and I convey to any hon. member of the House my regrets for any offence they may have taken at any comments made by me that may have inadvertently caused them any degree of difficulty.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the clarity of your decision.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, through you on behalf of my party, we accept your ruling and we accept the statement just made by the right hon. Prime Minister.