

### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. SYMES—ALTERATION IN OFFICIAL HANSARD RECORD

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. On Friday the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) raised, by way of a question of privilege, an apparent alteration to *Hansard* during the course of the preparation of the “blues” as they have been commonly referred to in our practice, by the hon. Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts).

The matter, as I indicated then, is rather fundamental to our procedures here, and our practices in recording the proceedings. I undertook to examine the circumstances to determine what in fact had occurred. On Friday the Secretary of State contributed his own intervention and indicated that indeed he had added the words, which were allegedly added, as stated by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie. He explained to the House his reasons for doing so.

The privilege of members in making alterations of this sort to *Hansard*, or the editors in making alterations of any sort to *Hansard*, is a long established practice of the House. To put upon members the stricture that the words would be recorded exactly as they were spoken sometimes would produce a printed text which would require punctuation and other assistances of a grammatical nature to make it intelligible.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** I say that very seriously. All of us in making speeches in the House, of course, speak faster and faster and have in our minds ideas which we want to express. Sometimes the actual words used are not as clear as the ideas. It has been a long established practice that there are often cases where words spoken when reported do not at all convey their meaning. Therefore, there has been some liberty in attempting to punctuate and add grammatical changes.

On the one hand I think it is well understood by all hon. members that it would be too difficult a stricture to produce the text without any of that kind of assistance. On the other hand, it has always been understood that the purpose of this procedure is not in any way to change the substance of the words which have been used by any member in debate. It has always been exercised in such a way, both on behalf of members of the House and on behalf of the Debates reporting staff, that it is accepted to clarify the expression that was intended, but not in any way to change the substance of the phrases spoken.

There is an obligation on members not to extend that exercise beyond its original intention. There is an even greater obligation upon the reporting staff and the editorial staff in Debates not to permit that kind of change to go beyond the original intention.

In the particular case raised by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie I cannot come to any other conclusion except that the addition of the words was more than simply grammatical. It changed the very substance of the answer which was given by the minister in the circumstances.

### Point of Order—Mr. Daudlin

Perhaps our practice has become relaxed over time. Because this privilege does exist in the hands of members they may expect that, if they have reached too far, the editorial staff will correct them and reject that kind of change. This has some merit. I do understand that to a very great extent members do rely on the judgment of the editorial staff in that respect. They expect that if they have over-reached a matter, that it will be rejected by the editorial staff. I look upon that as a fundamental obligation, as part of the duties of the editorial staff. However, it is part of the duty which in this case I do not think was properly exercised.

In examining the events which have taken place I have an initial indication that it was not accidental on the part of the editorial staff, and I have isolated the cause. It is an administrative matter, under my jurisdiction, which needs more attention. I simply wanted to report to hon. members that I have taken the matter that far, and I will need some time to give it further consideration as to what action might have to take place.

I do not think under any circumstances I would have anything more to say in terms of the minister's actions than I have already said. Respecting the person on the editorial staff who was involved, I will be having more to say and do about that, and I will report it to the House in due course.

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### POINT OF ORDER

#### MR. DAUDLIN—USE OF TELEVISION CAMERAS

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Kent-Essex (Mr. Daudlin) raised the problem on Friday afternoon concerning the angle of a television camera that was used. We try to be very careful about the use of cameras.

We have not issued explicit written instructions in any way, because I think all hon. members would agree that it would be extremely difficult to codify the instructions to the camera operators. We have asked them, and we have received co-operation all the way through this experience, that they would use only the guiding principle that we were doing this as an electronic *Hansard* and that the operation ought to be of a high quality. I believe that all hon. members would agree with me that the camera operators and everybody associated with television in the House of Commons have kept that principle very much in the forefront of their minds and they have done an excellent job.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** In this particular instance I have explored the problem as the hon. member requested. There was, indeed, some justification for the use of the camera in that particular position and some technical reason for attempting to tee on the notes, not in an effort to bring the notes to the camera so as to expose them to the viewer, but simply to avoid having to change cameras rapidly, in the middle of a sentence, on a