

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. Then I will hear the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I will just use the documents that are available to all members. I will leave it to the House to decide if what I have just said—

Mr. Speaker: That is not my problem at the moment. It may become my problem as I deal with the argument the hon. member is putting up. What I want to know is: Is the hon. member taking the position that he is making an allegation that the minister—

Mr. Gauthier: No.

Mr. Speaker: —deliberately misled the House? No.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct that impression that you got because I did not use those words. What I did say was that the government misled the House, and I said deliberately misled the House, and I can argue that point.

An hon. member: That's right.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member for Kamloops can help me.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to concur. I was listening obviously very carefully to my hon. friend for Ottawa—Vanier presenting his arguments. When he indicated that there had been misinformation, he did in fact refer to the government misleading the House as opposed to any particular member of the government.

Mr. Speaker: I am prepared to proceed to listen to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, but on the clear understanding that the House has had an assurance from him that there is no allegation that the minister has deliberately misled the House.

Hon. members will realize that that is something we have to clarify now. There may well be other arguments that I will have to listen to. I think I know where the argument is going, but I do not want to have any misunderstanding at this point.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I think I clarified what I said, what I meant to say, what I thought I had said—

An hon. member: And what you did say.

Mr. Gauthier: —and what I did say, I still maintain and I will repeat again. The government misled the House of

Commons and did it deliberately. That is the argument that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, and I will make the argument using the documents that we all have in hand today.

I take Standing Order 78(3)—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. Let us get the first issue cleared away. I will hear further. The hon. parliamentary secretary was seeking the floor.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, first of all may I say that any attempts by anybody to mislead the House, I do not want in any way to have reflected on the minister. I think that responsibility is mine, as it is an area of my responsibility to negotiate with the other parties and attempt to come to an agreement.

I would like to enter into the point of privilege raised by my hon. friend because I think that he has raised an important point. It is one that I think deserves a serious response.

• (1120)

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. We are still dealing with the question of the words used. I listened to the hon. member for Kamloops. I think it was appropriate to listen, at least momentarily, to the hon. parliamentary secretary.

I want to assure the hon. parliamentary secretary that before I make any decision he will be heard on the substantive argument that the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is raising. There was no need to go any further than that.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier has given us his word that he is not directing any accusation against the minister for intentional misleading. I will accept that and I will hear his argument further. Then I will call on other members.

Mr. Gauthier: It went through my mind, Mr. Speaker, but I just will not say it. I just would like to continue with my argument to the effect that this is a faulty notice. I want to make the point using documents that we have before us. In Standing Order 78(3) it states:

A Minister of the Crown who from his or her place in the House, at a previous sitting, has stated that an agreement could not be reached—

I underline "could not be reached". In the statement the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs made in the House yesterday he said: