believe that a reference to the proper committee is in order by way of clearing all members of Parliament of this accusation.

Mr. Speaker: First of all, I thank the hon. member for raising the matter and I thank the hon. member for Beaver River for her frankness which is in the best tradition of this place. I want to consider carefully the comments of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. The editorial, I think, has to be looked at from two points of view; one, what an hon. member in this place may or may not have said and, second, the content of the editorial itself, unless of course the hon. member for Calgary West wants to remove that aspect of it from his presentation.

However, I took it that his presentation and his claim of breach of privilege extended to the content of the editorial and not merely to an hon. member who may or may not have been quoted correctly. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, since I rose some five minutes ago the situation has broadened with the comments of the member for Athabasca. I had no idea that those kinds of comments were out and about. I thought this was an isolated case.

• (1530)

We might be well advised to take the matter under advisement for a day or two to give the member for Beaver River, and other members who have weekly newspapers in their ridings, a chance to look into it, to get a better sense of the degree to which that quote was used or abused, depending on the interpretation. Perhaps the House would be best served by leaving it at that stage for a few days, and then bringing it back to the floor of the House with some further information and evidence that might be of assistance to Your Honour in reaching a judgment.

Obviously I would like to stop the spread of the damage caused by the incorrect assertions. I am not quite sure what the best method to do that might be. That would give the member for Beaver River a better chance to search all the files. She seems to have a very good staff, judging by what they have produced for her in such a hurry. We might be best served with a little delay.

Mr. Speaker: Given the tenor of this, I do not want to leave it hanging too long. I wonder if the House would indulge me a moment. I would like to see the editorial. Would the hon. member for Calgary West have a Page bring it up to the Chair?

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Given the circumstances and the frankness of the hon. member for Beaver River, I am going to rule now.

I do not know what has been published in other newspapers, but this is the one that is presently in front of me.

This is far more an article purporting to report what the hon. member for Beaver River said than it is an editorial. It is a column in *The Mirror*, of Tuesday, April 10, 1990, on page 21. I am indebted to the hon. member for Calgary West for sending it to me so quickly so that I could look at it.

The position we are in is one in which we should apply our traditional balance in this place. The hon. member has come in front of her peers in this House and said: "Well, I seem to have said it. I completely and utterly withdraw and retract it". I really think that that is where the matter ought to end.

I have properly made similar rulings, I think, on other occasions when there is an unequivocal withdrawal by an hon. member. That is my ruling.

With that ruling, the matter is closed.

The hon. member for Beaver River seems to be seeking the floor. It will not necessary for her to address this matter any further, unless she has something she wants to say to members on a point of order. The ruling is now made.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PLANT PROTECTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski that Bill C-67, an act to prevent the importation, exportation and spread of pests injurious to plants and to provide for their control and eradication and for the certification of plants and other things, be read a second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to the legislative committee considering Bill C-66.