

Privilege—Mr. Caccia

Mr. Benjamin: Promise you won't send Carney.

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PRIVILEGE

OMISSION FROM QUOTATION

Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise the House that I am now ready to deal with the complaint raised by the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia). The point raised by the Hon. Member for Davenport concerned a reply given to a question by the Hon. Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) on Thursday, January 22, 1987. The essence of the complaint of the Hon. Member for Davenport was that there was a discrepancy between the *Hansard* record of the Hon. Minister's reply and the electronic record of his reply. I wish to inform the House that there is a perfectly satisfactory explanation for this discrepancy.

I have received a letter from the Editor in Chief of English *Hansard* which pointed out that, in the interests of accuracy, *Hansard* obtained a copy of the report in question that the Minister was referring to when he gave his reply, and noted that the Minister had omitted from his answer two words which were contained in the report. *Hansard* included these two words in the printed record, in spite of the fact that they had been omitted by the Minister. The Hon. Minister did not alter his "blues", and is completely innocent of any attempt to change the meaning of what he said in the House.

Hansard has the responsibility of producing an accurate report which does not change the meaning of anything said in the House. To perform this task a certain amount of editorial flexibility must be allowed.

In his letter to me the Editor of *Hansard* apologizes for an error in judgment, and for having embarrassed the Hon. Minister of the Environment, and the Hon. Member for Davenport. However, I do not attach any great blame to *Hansard*. They were only trying to perform their task in a professional manner by ensuring that the reply of the Minister conformed to the wording of the report to which the Minister was referring.

I recognize the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper) on a question of privilege.

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PRIVILEGE

RULING OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege arises out of the proceedings this morning before the Standing Committee on Government Operations. I wish to make it quite clear that I consider this a

question of privilege, because the actions before that committee prevented me from doing my job as a Member of Parliament. I will relate to you my reasons for coming to that conclusion.

In the specific instance this morning, my job was to call for public hearings into the Post Office plan. This is a matter of public policy which the committee has the responsibility to investigate. There were impediments and blocks put in my way when making this call for such hearings. The impediments were as follows. One, an unprecedented ruling by the chairman of the Committee that a motion before the Committee to call for public hearings on the Post Office was out of order. This is a matter under consideration by that committee. That was the first impediment. After I discussed this with the Chairman by way of a point of order, the chairman agreed that this motion would be considered at the end of the meeting. So this was understood by the members of the committee.

The second impediment was when I asked the committee to call for these hearings. By the end of the meeting, all the government members of the committee, except for the chairperson, had left the room, had vacated and abandoned the committee. Therefore, they robbed the committee of a quorum and the opportunity to consider the motion.

The effect of these impediments was that I was prevented from doing my job as a Member of Parliament, and calling upon Parliament, through its Committee, to perform the function of holding public hearings with regard to a plan that was being considered.

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the Hon. Member, but may I ask him whether he will have another opportunity to make the representations at the Committee which he feels he was not able to make today?

Mr. Keeper: I do not know, and I will explain why. The next scheduled meeting of the committee is on February 5, which is some time from now. This matter is fast proceeding, since the Minister only has 60 days within which to consider public input. The reason I say that I do not know whether I will have the opportunity is that I took the opportunity to bring the resolution forward at the meeting this morning. We previously had *in camera* meetings, at which this was considered. This was the first opportunity in a public forum to ask the Committee to call for these hearings. The committee could have voted me down, or debated it out. By way of ruling the motion out of order, and by way of abandoning the committee, it simply refused to give me an opportunity to call for the committee to fulfil one of its functions. I do not know whether I will have an opportunity to call for this again, because I do not know whether they will behave in the same manner at another meeting.

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I wish to briefly respond to the Hon. Member's point with