

Point of Order—Mr. Prud'homme

[Translation]

POINTS OR ORDER

REQUEST FOR PHOTOCOPY OF PETITION PRESENTED IN HOUSE

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, you made a ruling a while ago about the petitions tabled yesterday, and my point of order concerns those petitions.

The Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields), who is a very good friend, tabled a petition which said that the Official Opposition was presenting too many petitions yesterday.

I immediately went to the table to read the petition and to obtain a photocopy. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I was very surprised to hear that I would not get a complete photocopy, which is quite unprecedented. I was told: You can have a photocopy of half of it, namely the text, but not of the names.

However, I already knew quite well what the petition of the Hon. Member for Athabasca said and I wanted to know who were these Canadians who objected vigorously to having the Opposition present a series of petitions on deindexation.

I was very surprised at what happened, Mr. Speaker, because, for the last several years, I have been able to get nearly on the spot all the photocopies I wished of certain petitions which had caught my attention when I wanted to see the names of those who had signed them. I was therefore quite surprised not to be able to get a copy since these documents are official. Moreover, I was informed that I could copy it by hand later, but I could have sat down at the table to copy the names.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to see the names of these people immediately to satisfy myself that, while they might be Canadians from various parts of the country, they probably were, as they were indeed, I believe, employees of the House of Commons, and they had signed the petition on the spot.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, before a precedent is set, and in accordance with Citation 344 of the Fourth Edition of *Beauchesne*, I would like to ask you to rule today that, if a Member asks for a photocopy of a document which has been made public by the fact of being tabled, he should get it, and get all of it.

[English]

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: May I resolve this point of order, please. I will then hear from the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray), followed by the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields).

I think the Hon. Member is raising a point of order which was brought to my attention earlier this morning. The Hon. Member did leave a note at my office last night. I was otherwise occupied at that precise moment.

I have checked our practices. I understand it is our practice, in fact, not to reply to requests generally for photocopies of petitions but to indicate that petitions are available for reading, after, of course, a judgment has been made with respect to whether or not they are in order. Therefore, I appreciate the point the Hon. Member is raising. I would be perfectly happy to review our practices and report back to the Chamber on the matter.

The Hon. Member for Windsor West on a point of order.

ALLEGED ACCUSATION BY MR. MULRONEY

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have always understood it to be the tradition that when something is said by an Hon. Member which is untrue, the Hon. Member about which it is said has the right to rise in his place and put the facts before the House. In the case of the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria), he wants to put before the House that the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) with respect to his having spent taxpayers' funds to go to Taiwan is untrue.

Mr. Tobin: Absolutely false.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Either on a point of order or on a question of privilege, it has always been traditional for the Hon. Member to have the right to set that out.

In fact, if Your Honour looks at the precedents you will see that there have been occasions when allegations by one Member against another have been accepted as grounds for a question of privilege, referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections and have been the matter of a decision. One way or another this House will be tainted unless the untrue and unfair accusation of the Prime Minister against the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell is put aside.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Windsor West has, indeed, just done what it is our custom to do. The Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell rose on a question of privilege which, in my view, is quite a different matter. I asked him to repeat his question of privilege and what he put before the House was the issue that there was a question of privilege involved.

● (1210)

Ms. Copps: It was a lie.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

An Hon. Member: Be quiet, Sheila.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate exactly the point the Hon. Member for Windsor West is making. That is why I chose to let him make his point of order. However, I have always tried to make the distinction between the use of a short statement under a point of order, which I understand to have certain values and meanings, and the use of that through a Question