

Beauchesne's sixth edition further discusses what changes are allowed to be made to these verbatim transcripts. Again Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 828, notes:

Minor corrections can be made to the Evidence by informing the clerk of the committee who causes to have printed an Erratum to the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence.

More importantly it states that:

Corrections of an important nature can only be made by the adoption of a motion in the committee.

• (1505)

The key point is the use of the word correction. The dictionary definition of the verb correct means to amend, set right or make free of errors. In no way could the word correct used in this context imply the complete expunging of the record of the testimony of a witness. It is my respectful submission that in passing the motion to expunge the testimony of the International Association of the Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the committee exceeded its jurisdiction. This makes the question of privilege a matter for the House and for you, Mr. Speaker.

This is made even clearer by the fact committee and the Chair have other means of dealing with the witnesses who are unruly, defamatory or otherwise disrupt the workings of the committee. Beauchesne's outlines several of these options, none of which were followed in the committee last night. Beauchesne's 6th Edition, Citation 820 (1) notes that:

The Chairman of the committee is responsible for order and decorum in the committee.

There are a number of ways the committee chair can preserve order, ranging from cautioning the witness to having the witness removed from the committee hearing.

The chairman did not caution the witness during the testimony but allowed the testimony to be given in full. Only after the testimony was placed on the verbatim record was a motion presented to expel the witness and wipe out the testimony unless the witness withdrew certain remarks. The witness refused and was expelled on the verbatim and the verbatim record expunged.

*Privilege*

This, too, is clearly beyond the jurisdiction of the committee. Again, Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 820, states that:

Disobedience to the orders of a committee, provided those orders are within the scope of the committee's authority, is a contempt of the House—

As I have already outlined, those orders were clearly outside the scope of the committee's authority. However, even if it were within the authority of the committee, Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 820 (2) states:

A committee has no authority to punish one of its members or other persons for an alleged offence committed against it. Only the House can decide that an offence has been committed.

The fact that these steps such as adjournment or cautioning the witness were not taken should indicate that the committee members and the chairman did not find the testimony disruptive, defamatory or otherwise interfering with the work of the committee.

Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 109, clearly states that:

Witnesses before committees share the same privilege and freedom of speech as Members.

Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 75 states that:

The privilege of freedom of speech is both the least questioned and most fundamental right of the Member of Parliament on the floor of the House and in committee.

Although I have outlined a number of serious, in fact fatal procedural flaws in the proceedings of the committee last night, the essence of my point of privilege is that the witness before a committee of this House has been effectively silenced by the government majority on that committee. It is vital that you deal with this very serious breach of privilege with the utmost dispatch.

The remedies I seek are as follows. First, the motion to expunge the verbatim record be declared void.

Second, the testimony of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers be restored to the verbatim record of the committee. In the alternative, if the record has already been destroyed that the committee be required to rehear the entire testimony of the witness from that union.

Third, a declaration be issued in the clearest terms possible to all members that the destruction or expunging of a record of a committee is unacceptable, unparlia-