

Speaker's Ruling

I bring this to your attention. The member for Beaver River is in the Chamber and I think she can assure the House that the editorialist is not quoting her. I believe that these kinds of assertions in a weekly newspaper do constitute a contempt of this member, for sure, and a contempt of this Parliament. They are simply not true.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member who has raised this question of privilege has made no comment about being prepared to move the usual motion. I wonder if that was an oversight.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, with my 11 years in the Chamber, I should not have forgotten that. If you were to find a *prima facie* case, I would certainly be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Beaver River.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that in conducting my spring tour in my riding in the week of the final GST vote I was consulting with several people in many areas in my riding. Of course, it was a huge area of concern for Albertans in general that two of the members of the Tory caucus were removed from their caucus because of their vote on the GST.

When I talk about bribery I know that money is involved. Generally, it was the timing of this particular per diem expense coming out of committee that was, perhaps, made reference to. As far as I can remember, I clearly did not say that the party whip was bribing them with money. Those were two concurrent situations that just happened to take place at the same time.

I did make reference publicly in Alberta and across Canada in the media to comments made by the member for Edmonton Southeast vis-a-vis some of the things that were going on in the Tory caucus. I think it is quite clear to this Chamber that Canada realizes that I certainly am not privy to what goes on in the Tory caucus. I made general comments about that and people were voicing their concerns.

I certainly am prepared and happy to immediately retract that statement, if such was made. But I can say with clear conscience that I may have used the idea of pressuring, but certainly not the idea of bribery. I will be happy to retract that if, in fact, it was said.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have just heard both the issue raised by our colleague across the way, the hon. whip for the government, and also the clarification given to us by the hon. member for Beaver River. Notwithstanding any retraction, if a retraction is necessary, it should still be remembered that the article in question is still out there and so long as it is in the public domain, and the newspaper story in question remains unretracted, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the privileges of our colleague across the way have been offended individually. We are all wearing the same uniform in here. When such accusations are made, to a degree the privileges of the House as well are similarly offended in my view.

To that extent, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the issue would be investigated further, perhaps by means of reference to the parliamentary committee in question, so that the House itself can obtain redress from the serious accusation that was made, regardless of who made the accusation. Notwithstanding any withdrawal by one individual, if such a withdrawal is warranted, the other withdrawal must occur as well in order for this House to obtain redress, in my opinion.

Miss Grey: Mr. Speaker, my staff has just researched this for me and I see that on April 5, 1990, I was quoted as saying how damaging it is to MPs that they are bribed to vote for face losing when the government dangles these tax-free allowances.

Mr. Speaker, I will admit that I did say that, having now seen it in print, and I will retract that. To be fair to *The Mirror* of Morinville, that was my quote and I do stand corrected in the House of Commons. I was certainly trying to take it deeper than that. I was not referring particularly to the hon. member but was making comment about the particular system. I do stand corrected. I retract that and I will certainly bear no ill will to *The Mirror* of Morinville. I will take the advice of the Chair.

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, on this very important point of privilege I would just like to add that this has not just appeared in *The Mirror* of Morinville. My riding of Athabasca neighbours that of my friend from across the way. This same quote has been carried in a number of weekly newspapers in my riding. I would suspect it was pretty generally quoted throughout Alberta. I do not know what your decision will be but I do