

Time Allocation

made. I heard only part of it—I was outside—but if he did say it was a lie, then I think he should withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: The House will know from the interventions that have been made that the point at issue, as always, is not what the hon. member can say but how he can say it. The problem does not relate to the ability of the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) to differ with the statements to which he has made reference in his intervention and to indicate that they are, in his opinion, wrong or that they are categorically different from his own view of the circumstances or of the facts. No member is deprived of the right to make those interventions, and in fact debate is the very place for them, to challenge statements made on the other side of the House and to disagree.

However, the practice in terms of the etiquette of the House is that interventions, no matter how vigorous or how strident, always be made in parliamentary form. It might have been possible and accepted on past occasions that the word "lie" be used in some context, and it is indeed possible to use it, as the hon. member did at the beginning of his speech this afternoon, as "the big lie" or things of that sort. The precedent books will turn up examples in which the Chair has examined the use of the phrase and said that in a particular context it was acceptable. However, in general terms, as soon as the hon. member referred to an individual member—that is to say, the statements of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie)—and as soon as he indicated that in making those statements the Minister of Finance was lying, it seems to me that the hon. member has clearly departed from our practices and has clearly said what he is entitled perhaps to say but in a way in which he is not entitled to say it in the chamber. Therefore, I would ask him to withdraw the remark and perhaps put it in more parliamentary language.

Mr. Rae: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it quite clear that I did not want to attribute any motive, in so far as the word which I used could be ascribed as attributing a motive, and I would withdraw the word and replace it with the word "untruth", which I hope will be acceptable to Your Honour.

I can assure the House that I was not even particularly passionate when I was speaking. It was nothing compared to what I can be. But in so far as a motive could be ascribed to either the hon. member from Edmonton or the Minister of Finance, naturally, quite happily and generously I withdraw the word "lie" and replace it with the word "untruth". But I hope that the confusion that has been created—and it is my own fault—by the use of that word will not obscure the thrust of my intervention. The thrust of my intervention is that the government has been attempting to convince the people of Canada—

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member has said that he withdraws the word "lie" and replaces it with the synonym "untruth". I have Beauchesne's here and I see there are about 35 Speaker's rulings with respect to the word "lie". I assume, sir, that your direction to the hon. member would not simply be to allow him to with-

draw a word and replace it with a synonym which, to all intents and purposes, means the same thing.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There are two points to be made. In the first place, no member has the right to replace language that he has withdrawn. It is a freedom that members seem to take unto themselves when they make what has now become a characteristically ungenerous withdrawal of unparliamentary remarks. When members do withdraw their remarks, their ingenuity in finding a way to withdraw the offending words and still keep the sword in, as it were, is quite remarkable, and this was no exception.

However, it is not open to a member to attempt to replace retroactively language which he previously used. He can withdraw the offending phrase, which the hon. member says he does completely. In addition, the problem is that no expression which has been found to be unparliamentary can be categorically and always described to be unparliamentary until the context is seen. Therefore, attempting to reverse now and decide on the context to be put on the language by the hon. member, even if he could rephrase his language in the way he wishes to do, would be most difficult for the Chair.

I think that the point which has to be made in all these circumstances is the one that has been accepted by the hon. member, and that is that there are some constraints, not upon the message he can deliver but only on the form in which he can do it. He has accepted that and he has withdrawn it. I think that every member must be permitted to do that and that must resolve the matter procedurally.

Mr. Rae: Mr. Speaker, the point of my intervention has been to say that the government has been attempting to convince the Canadian people that the people who are obstructing this legislation are the opposition. I want to suggest to the government that that is completely untrue. The case is that we have a serious difference of opinion within the House of Commons as to the nature of the tax credit, which is a major reform of our income tax system and which some of us have been studying for some time. To suggest that members of the opposition should lie down and let a piece of legislation through because of some Gallup polls which have been put forward by the government and which are waved at us from time to time is, I suggest, an abuse of the democratic and parliamentary process.

The government does not seem to recognize that there is a legitimate difference of opinion in the House as to the merits of the proposal, that there are serious amendments which have been put forward. As I said before, we have played no games with the government. We have submitted our amendments, we have let them see our amendments, we have not concealed a thing. We have done it in a constructive spirit and we have indicated from the very first day on which I spoke in this debate on October 20 what our position was going to be with respect to amendments.

Now we are told that the government is not prepared to consider any of our amendments, that all our amendments will be considered, on a *prima facie* basis, unreasonable. That