

Privilege—Mr. Broadbent

That is what the Leader of the New Democratic Party and I are raising with you, Mr. Speaker. We expect—nay, Sir, we demand—honest answers to honest questions. We have a right to hear those.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, for my own edification I would like to know, if there are rules in the House that do not require honest answers, whether the Chair would please allow me the privilege of reading that information.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to get in the middle of this NDP leadership campaign. I want to point out to my hon. friend the actual words of the Prime Minister. They are:

“So if the Hon. Member would kindly wait until Friday—”

Mr. Barrett: “—and then for the final report—”

Mr. Lewis: My hon. friend waited until Friday, asked the Hon. Minister about the meeting that was held today, got his answer from the Minister that there was no need for an interim report, that there was no emergency, and in fact that the final report will be presented in a reasonable length of time. Obviously, there is no misleading of the House, either intentional or by accident. All my hon. friend is doing is twisting the words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) for political, partisan purposes.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask Hon. Members to pay attention to this because it is important. I let go a couple of comments earlier that might be considered imputing motives or otherwise. I do not want to be unduly harsh with the Minister. However, it does not help the Chair at all in a discussion such as this as to whether or not there is a question of privilege to be imputing motives of either side.

I am quite prepared to listen to further argument on this if other Members are rising.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, one of the questions which comes up with respect to this is that the answers which were provided by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) were provided in French. The answers as are given in French are even less ambiguous than the translation suggests in English. In fact, if we look at the French *Hansard* we see that the statement which was made to the Hon. Member for Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca (Mr. Barrett) was:

Alors, si le député veut bien attendre à vendredi prochain et ensuite au rapport définitif, je pense qu'il verra le fruit d'un travail au niveau national—

In short, there was a specific commitment that we would see “*le fruit d'un travail au niveau national*” in the final report, *au rapport définitif*.

It seems to me that there is no possible construction that can be put on those statements in French except that the Prime Minister was saying to this House that there would be a statement of the results, at least of an interim sort, of this committee on Friday, and that there would be a final definitive report later. The French phrasing makes it absolutely clear. I do not think that the Government should be permitted to start misleading the House at this stage.

Mr. Dick: They have not. That is a lie.

Mr. Speaker: With the greatest of respect to the Hon. Member, as I remember the exchange it was in the English language. I know enough about *Hansard* to sometimes wonder whether in English or in French there is an exact replication of all the words.

What we are facing here is—

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Is the Hon. Member rising on a point of order? If I made an error, I will hear the Hon. Member.

Mr. Langdon: I am quoting from the French *Hansard*. I could do so also from the English.

The question was put in English. It states: [*Traduction*] and the answer was stated in French, *en français*.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for pointing that out to the Chair. I appreciate very much the fact that he did.

What we have here is an allegation from the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) and another Member that they were led to expect that there would be a report, some sort of an interim report today from the de Grandpré Committee. I listened to the exchanges, as did other Hon. Members. I am not for one minute going to say that the interpretation that the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) puts on that exchange might not have led to the idea that there would be some sort of interim report today. I think that is clear. However, the Hon. Minister has been on his feet today and has said there was a meeting, the committee reported, but there is not an interim report in writing. What we are getting into now is a debate as to what kind of report or how substantive that report should be, or should it be published or should it be in writing. That is a legitimate item for debate and it is a legitimate item for comment.