

MR. BROOME: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to hon. members. They are not obstructing.

Now that we have two clear precedents that the minister in his one statement used two unparliamentary words or statements, I ask that he be asked to withdraw those statements and apologize to the House.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I have attempted all afternoon to put on the record some of the facts upon which the allegations I made are founded. Your Honour did not find that I should do that. I would be pleased to do that at this time in order to show that there has been a systematic attitude taken by the opposition in order to prevent the House and the government from carrying on their normal business.

For the past five days we have been unable to carry on government business. The opposition has systematically, with every premeditation, interrupted the procedures of this House with spurious points of order and spurious questions of privilege in order to prevent us from proceeding. If Your Honour wants me to document it, I will point out that there have been until today 25 questions of privilege, none of which were recognized by Your Honour. There have been 21 points of order, none of which were determined to be valid, and over a long—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Does the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville have a new point of order?

Mr. Cossitt: Arising from what was said, I presume it would be a new point of order, yes.

Madam Speaker: I think I can rule on that one. Beauchesne says it is not out of order to say that a member has obstructed the business of the House or that a speech is an abuse of the rules of the House. That is from Beauchesne page 130, the fourth edition.

In addition, the context in which something is said has to be taken into account. The hon. member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens) said that he looked at the blues. The idea is that I should look at the blues. I will do that, but in the meantime I am referring this commentary of Beauchesne to hon. members. I will look at the blues. I will spend the whole evening looking at the blues, and I will determine whether the hon. Minister of Supply and Services has used unparliamentary language.

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, in addition to looking at the blues—I hope you do not spend all night looking at them but just a brief time—may I also ask you to look at the fifth edition of Beauchesne. Your Honour referred to the fourth edition, but I think the more recent edition makes it very clear that the two references to which I have referred are both unparliamentary.

Madam Speaker: I am happy to assure that the officers of the Table will put before me all the references that are relevant.

Mr. Cossitt: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My point of order arises from what I consider to be—after refer-

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ring to Beauchesne—a further unparliamentary expression used by the Minister of Supply and Services when he used once—maybe it was twice—the word “spurious”. I refer to Beauchesne at page 113. The debates of the House of Commons for October 13, 1966, at page 8598 and October 18, 1966, at page 8784 establish that the word “spurious” is unparliamentary. I ask whether I am correct in this regard and, if I am, that the minister be asked to withdraw his remark.

Madam Speaker: The word “spurious” is considered to be parliamentary. According to Beauchesne’s list, that has been so since 1958. At any rate, it is used very often in the House, and no one has objected to it, so I suppose the practice is that the word “spurious” is parliamentary.

Mr. MacKay: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have been listening fairly closely to the exchanges, and I want to say that it is my understanding that the word used by my hon. friend, the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais), was “scurrilous”. If that is the case, that word was used and withdrawn by the House leader of the New Democratic Party.

However, my point of order really relates to the remarks the minister made with respect to a systematic attempt—outside the rules, as he indicated—by hon. members on this side of the House to obstruct the business of the House. We all know that you, Madam Speaker, have publicly stated that the conduct of hon. members on this side of the House has been perfectly in order. I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that the Minister of Supply and Services by making that kind of statement has contradicted what you have said publicly, and I think he should withdraw that remark.

● (1740)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, the term I used is defined as meaning immaterial or unsubstantial, and the word was “spurious” not “scurrilous”. In addition, I never said that they did not use the rules in order to obstruct; I know that they are. However, I would draw to your attention page 440 of Erskine May where it is stipulated quite clearly that members are being disorderly when they are obstructing the business of the House, even though they use the rules.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKay: I wish to apologize to my hon. friend. I now see what he was referring to; it is the points of order that he has been making all afternoon.

Madam Speaker: For the record, I just want to say to the hon. member that I said publicly that none of the members of this House were violating the rules. I would not allow myself to have any kind of opinion on the proceedings of this House. I did notice in the same article, though, that some hon. member had said that some of my judgments or rulings were nonsense, but I am sure they were misquoted.