

and immunities of individual members or the rights and powers of the House as a collectivity are categorized.

The difficulty in categorizing the purported breach of privilege led the Chair to consider whether perhaps the action at issue was not a breach at all but rather a contempt; broadly speaking, an offence against the authority or the dignity of the House of Commons.

The Chair has found that no breach of privilege exists but that it is at least arguable that there is a contempt at issue. The finding is of little practical significance however, because the next question which the Chair must address, in either case, is the same. That is, is this matter of sufficient importance to be afforded privilege treatment. In other words, should it be put to the House immediately?

Were I to respond to that question in the affirmative the hon. member who raised the question of privilege would be invited to propose to the House a motion referring the matter to the Privileges and Elections Committee. The motion could then be debated, amended and voted upon. Depending on the outcome of that process, the matter might then be considered by a committee and reappear before the House if and when the committee reported.

It is with a full appreciation of the whole complex process entailed in according privilege treatment to any matter that the Chair must decide whether or not to find a matter is *prima facie* a question of privilege or contempt.

The case at hand involves a misuse of a facsimile of House of Commons stationary in a pathetic attempt, presumably, to lend some sort of official status to the perpetrator's cause. Furthermore, the offence has occurred in the United States where neither the House nor its committees could exercise any authority. The Chair is most reluctant to accord to a case of this nature the importance that would undoubtedly attach to it were I to find a *prima facie* case of contempt and accordingly I refuse to do so.

[Translation]

In concluding my remarks on this matter, the Chair wishes to express its appreciation to the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, the hon. member for Kamloops and the Government House Leader for the calibre of their contributions to this discussion. All three

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performed in the best traditions of the place in focusing on the procedural question involved and in avoiding argument on the content of the letter at issue.

[English]

The Chair is most conscious of the restraint exercised in this regard. There is a danger always that under the guise of defending our privilege we would provide a platform for those who espouse opinions repugnant to our own. That danger has been neatly averted in this instance and the Chair is grateful for the co-operation of all hon. members in this respect.

• (1520)

### EDITORIAL—THE MIRROR

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that I have not had time to give you notice, but some five minutes ago a member of my caucus handed me an editorial from *The Mirror* of Morinville of Tuesday, April 10, 1990. Morinville is a town in Alberta and *The Mirror* is, I believe, a weekly newspaper. The editorial is entitled: "MP Grey decries "goon tactics" to pass GST". It is not the headline I am concerned about.

In the last five minutes I have had an opportunity to talk to the member for Beaver River just briefly and to show her this editorial. I would like to read into the record one particular paragraph of the editorial because I think it brings the House into contempt and certainly this member into contempt. I understand from the member for Beaver River that this is not the kind of remarks she made, although the editorial writer seems to attribute them to her. The word "she" in the article refers to the hon. member for Beaver River. It reads:

She also pointed out the damages made to democracy when members of Parliament are "bribed" to vote for the GST or lose lucrative life-time pensions. Ms. Grey noted the government whip, Jim Hawkes, dangled an extra \$7000 tax-free allowance for them if they vote for the government rather than their constituents.

I want to take this opportunity to assure the House and the people of Canada that I have dangled no such offer in front of anybody in an attempt to get them to vote for the GST. I find it abhorrent that any editorial writer in this country would consider that members of Parliament are bribable in any way, shape or fashion in terms of the public interest. I do not think that is true. It is a crime, according to the Parliament of Canada Act. This editorial accuses me of having committed that kind of a crime.