

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I have outlined the first occurrence. Second, on the same page *Hansard* records the member as accusing me of falsehoods. Third, further down on the same page the hon. member for Calgary Centre accuses me of uttering deceits, dishonesty and statements that are known to be untrue.

There can be no doubt that the three quotations I have just read are no more than gratuitous and slanderous attacks on a fellow hon. member of this House and, as such, are a breach of parliamentary privilege. They violate the basic principles of parliamentary language and proceedings which lie at the very foundation of orderly debate in a parliamentary democracy. The rules and the precedents are unanimous in their condemnation of this sort of language.

• (1510)

On April 24, 1978, Mr. Speaker Jerome made this assessment of how debate should be conducted in Parliament:

We must adhere to a certain standard of language and a certain standard of conduct in the House, in order to maintain a proper standard of dignity in respect to the debates here. Inevitably, every time we get away from the substance of debate and cross over into the area of personal reflection, on the one side or the other, we always run a very high risk of putting that whole sense of dignity and decorum in jeopardy.

As soon as I left the House on April 21, the hon. member for Calgary Centre clearly crossed that line so well described in the passage I have just quoted. Because he could not understand and cannot yet understand the substance of the energy program of the government, he turned to *ad hominem* rhetoric of the worst kind.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I think I have the gist of the hon. minister's question of privilege and I will interrupt him at this point. He referred to language which was used by the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre), as reported in *Hansard* of April 21. Since the hon. minister gave me some idea of what his question of privilege was all about I referred to *Hansard* of that date. I must say that I have one particular problem with this question of privilege. It is not that the language used cannot be qualified as unparliamentary, because I believe it was unparliamentary. No member can accuse another member of "absolute falsehood" or say that an hon. member is "downright dishonest". As I read this, it is not accusing the minister obliquely of downright dishonesty but quite directly.

My problem with this particular question of privilege is that it was not dealt with at the time it occurred. Unparliamentary language should be dealt with when it occurs because it is only at that point that one can assess the tone or the atmosphere of the House and especially the kind of disturbance which that kind of language might create in the House. I remind hon. members that there are two elements in dealing with the matter of unparliamentary language. It is the language itself, whether it derogates from what is considered to be parliamentary or from the spirit of what is considered to be parliamentary. I urge hon. members not only to think of the actual list—

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because I think it needs to be updated—but to think of the spirit of decorum which is required by hon. members in the House.

Because the matter was not dealt with immediately, it is very difficult for me to ask the hon. member to withdraw a week later, although if he wished to do so, I would find it completely within the spirit of parliamentary behaviour. But I remind hon. members that I deplore excessive uses of language, and I do not feel they are conducive to orderly debate in the House.

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, in his specious question of privilege the minister made a number of comments about the National Energy Program.

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. member will recognize that I am not being too hard on him by asking him to withdraw his words now, but I will certainly not allow any comment on what I have just said or on the question of privilege.

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, I was not commenting upon your judgment or upon what you have just said. In raising his question of privilege, the minister made a number of editorial statements regarding general policy upon which I will not comment now.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. This is not the time to debate those statements.

[*Translation*]

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, you will recall, on reading *Hansard* of April 21, that I raised the point of order when I heard the hon. member opposite voice the allegations to which the minister is referring. At the time, I indicated that I had clearly heard what the minister is now referring to, namely, the allegations made by the hon. member. The hon. member then denied the fact he had said anything unparliamentary. He said, and I quote from page 16477:

MR. ANDRE: I will have to examine the blues. I certainly do not want to use any unparliamentary language . . .

Madam Speaker: Order, please! I merely wish to point out to the minister that I had considered the comments he made at the time he himself raised the point of order. *Hansard*, which I have in front of me, clearly indicates that the minister then called upon the Speaker to straighten out the situation. The Speaker gave a ruling to the best of his knowledge. He ruled on the situation as he understood it. I do not wish to reconsider that ruling. If the point of order had been raised much sooner, and if the minister had then persisted in requesting a revision of the Speaker's ruling I believe it would have been possible to settle the matter then and there. But since a week has passed, I do not think it would be in the best interests of the House to reconsider this matter.

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, may I remind you that I wrote to you at the first opportunity after reading *Hansard*—