

Income Tax Act

Mr. Lang: In terms of making direct references, Mr. Speaker, it would have been better if the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) had chosen not to say "the Minister of Transport, of all people". What kind of reference was that nice phrase meant to have? I have in the past respected the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

I did refer to the lies and deception with which the Conservative party practices its spread of insidious incitement of dislike across this country. I stand by that. It is part of their program in terms of tactics that any one of them may want to associate with or may very well dissociate themselves from.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With regard to the last intervention of the minister, I do not think he is helping the Chair in clarifying his point of view as far as accusations are concerned. I must bring to the attention of hon. members that this House is a place where debate is engaged in. It is not always possible to identify points of order or remarks that could be unparliamentary on one occasion and acceptable on another.

At this time I can only refer hon. members to citations at my disposal. They must make their own personal judgment as to what action they might wish to take on a further occasion. I do not want to prevent them from looking at the transcript of the debate before deciding to raise the matter at a later date. They should be left with that possibility. At the same time, I wish to bring to their attention that one of our most renowned authors, Erskine May, in his nineteenth edition of parliamentary practice states at page 430, and I quote:

Abusive and insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder. Certain expressions which have caused the Chair to intervene from time to time are listed as an Appendix to this Chapter.

Expressions which are unparliamentary when applied to individuals are not always so considered when applied to a whole party.

This might open the door to abuse. I am not going to judge whether it does in this case. I was not in the chair when the remarks were expressed.

With regard to what the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) and other members might have expressed, it is my first impression that the minister has been passing judgment on party policies or members who are identified as a party. In that way, I do not at this time see that there can be any question of privilege or point of order.

If the hon. member thinks otherwise, it will be his decision as to whether the remark of the minister goes beyond the citation that I have quoted. I could give other citations from Beauchesne's where the Chair is requested to intervene at the earliest opportunity to prevent abusive language, passing judgment, or reflecting on hon. members. However, I will not take the time of the House at this time. I will leave it to hon. members' own judgement and decision at the next sitting of the House.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I appreciate Your Honour's trying to de-escalate a situation which was starting to escalate. The difficulty is, as Your

Honour said, that you were not in the chair when some of this unfortunate rhetoric came from the lips of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). I heard all of his speech, and I heard some of the gratuitous references he made at the close of his speech.

I am somewhat surprised at the sort of ruling tentatively made. If I understand it correctly, the minister can smear a party for spreading as party policy lies and deception, but he cannot do that in terms of members of the House of Commons. As I heard the minister, he said he was deadly serious in his allegation of spreading lies and deception as party policy. However, before Your Honour came to the chair, the Minister of Transport said definitely that the western Conservative party were spreading lies and deception. I can speak somewhat objectively on this because I am not a member, whatever that means, of the western Conservative party. Whether he is trying to get over the generic word of party followers, which none of us can control, I do not know.

● (2102)

I do not believe the minister would be so naïve as to think that sometimes in the province of Quebec things are not said which the minister himself would not support in the heat of debate and/or when the battle lines are drawn in terms of an election. But the minister, in the calmness and coolness of the House of Commons tonight—not on the hustings during election time—said distinctly those words. I am not sure about my deputy House leader, but I, for one, would like to reserve the right to raise a very definitive question of privilege if the blues support three different references I heard the minister make specifically to members of the western Conservative party spreading lies and deception, let alone as party policy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) would agree with me, I am sure, that I have already allowed him and any other members who think they have been offended to raise the matter at the next sitting of the House. There is no restriction as far as that goes. I did give a chance to hon. members to start from a reference I have given them, but they can look up any other reference or interpretations of the rules and they can question the point of view or the remarks of the minister if they wish.

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I trust that my colleagues will not be too harsh on the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) for his defamatory and derogatory remarks. One reason Canada is so divided today is because of attacks by this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Towers: "Divide and rule" has been the approach taken by these people and, now that we are hearing the cries of an individual whose empire is crumbling around him, I do not think we should be too hard on him. We should recognize we only have to tolerate him until the end of this session.

He said he would like to take the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) for a ride. Well, if the hon. member for Joliette