

Privilege—Miss Bégin

making is that when the accusation of cover-up came from this side, it related very substantially to the point that these ministers, including the Prime Minister, tried to obscure. They did not ask relevant questions when they should have, because if they had received the answers they might have been forced into assuming ministerial responsibility, which they never have done. Then they came back to the House and never acknowledged that the real fault lies, not with the RCMP, but the real problem is the government on the other side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: We on this side of the House could document the allegation of a cover-up, and apart from points we on this side of the House would make, the Minister of National Health and Welfare has provided the best possible argument by saying, as a member of the cabinet, that she thinks they were ignoring their responsibility. I would say that she thinks they were involved in a cover-up in burying their own essential role in this whole mess.

[Translation]

MISS BÉGIN—REMARKS IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, a while ago I got up quickly and realized that, since two women ministers are present in the House at this time, it was not quite clear which of the two was being unfairly accused. It became clear that I was the person concerned—my name was mentioned—and I therefore rise on the question of privilege.

The leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) should have had the decency to check with me about the unfounded serious allegations he has just made. He has just quoted an excerpt from the *Toronto Sun*, which I saw for the first time around ten minutes to two this afternoon and which seems to repeat word for word without giving any journalist's name, the text written by a student at Carleton University and published in the students' newspaper called *The Charlatan*.

In this regard, I need only add that I have always supported the work and actions—particularly with regard to the current parliamentary crisis which resembles more a media event than anything else—of my colleague the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) and, naturally, the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau). Even now, in my office, I am in the process of writing a telegram to the newspapers the *Toronto Sun* and *The Charlatan* setting the record straight.

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[English]

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could join in the love-in we have just witnessed from the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and I hope that when the Prime Minister gets his subpoena from the McDonald commission he will be as forthcoming with that commission as he tried to be with respect to the House of Commons this afternoon. I think this is very important because of all that

[Mr. Broadbent.]

has gone on here today, particularly the Prime Minister's accusation.

The Prime Minister has not withdrawn the accusation he made the other day in the House which affects all members of this House and one member very particularly. The Prime Minister has ignored the Standing Orders of the House and, indeed, the admonition in citation 157 of the fourth edition of *Beauchesne's* with respect to what is appropriate to be read into the record of the House of Commons with respect to a matter. The citation is on page 133 of *Beauchesne's*. He has done all those things.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Let me clarify this point because there seems to be considerable concern about the use of a quotation from a newspaper, which is not a strange occurrence in the House. Before we go any further, if there is any argument about the use in the House of a quotation from a newspaper, I would want to make sure I was clear, because there seems to be some suggestion that I was establishing a precedent by allowing that to be done. I would be quite happy to prohibit, at any time, quotations from newspapers being used by hon. members. It would cut out a great deal of verbiage. However, it seems to me to be a well-established practice of the House.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That is not the point, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The point is, sir, that matters which are quoted from newspapers—whether correctly or incorrectly; and in the context in which the Prime Minister did so, even if they are correct—are not the subject of privilege in the House of Commons. That is the point. The hon. member for Central Nova was accused here in this House on a question of privilege.

● (1552)

Mr. Trudeau: He was not. It was your question of privilege, not mine.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The hon. member for Central Nova and the hon. member for Peace River raised a question of privilege with respect to things that were said to have been said, I assume, in this House of Commons. There is no record that the things the Prime Minister has said were said, and reported to have been said, in the House of Commons. That is the point, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Trudeau: I am not claiming privilege.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, there is one other thing that bothers me very much as a member of the House. The Prime Minister put a question, in the course of his discourse, as to what was our view with respect to the question of ministerial responsibility; what was our view with respect to what ought to be done. He, having put that question, I think is entitled to an answer. It is the view of Her Majesty's Loyal