Administration of Justice

[*English*]

Mr. Nielsen: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I recognize the very fine point which the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) has raised. I should point out to him, though, that when the initial reference was made to newspapers it was not a reference to a proceeding taking place in this house. I suggest to the hon. member for Lapointe that there is a distinct difference.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker—

[*English*]

Mr. Nielsen: On a question of privilege—

An hon. Member: Whose privilege?

Mr. Nielsen: The privileges of all members of this house. Your Honour has made a ruling. It is beneath the dignity of the Chair to have hon. members argue the merits of that ruling once made. The ruling has been made and it behooves no hon. member to take issue with that ruling, which is precisely what the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) is doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We accept the ruling you made a moment ago and the hon. member for Villeneuve will abide by it.

But you certainly have read, in Beauchesne, citation 157, paragraph 5, which says:

(5) It is not in order to read articles in newspapers—

And so on—

—emanating from persons outside the house and referring to, or commenting on, or denying anything said by a member—

We have the right to quote newspaper articles as long as it is not out of order. If you let the hon. member for Villeneuve read this article, you will find that it is not out of order. If it is against the rules, then the Conservatives can rise on a point of order.

It is permissible to read newspaper articles when it is according to the rules. To know if in this it is out of order, let them allow the member for Villeneuve to start reading his article. That is normal.

But they are afraid, Mr. Speaker, that is all.

There can be no harm in reading the article, it will not violate citation 157, paragraph 3, 5 and 6.

But to find out, the hon. member for Villeneuve must first read the article, otherwise you will never know. That is what we want.

We respect your ruling. The hon. member for Villeneuve will comply with it. I have read what he wishes to read. It is going to hurt, but it is not out of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Press, and I quote in English:

The *Star* says it has located Gerda Munsinger, centre of a new sex-and-security debate in the Commons, alive and well in a Munich apartment.

Mr. Nielsen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Yukon on a point of order.

Mr. Nielsen: My point of order is this. Your Honour has ruled that unless the hon. member adopts as his own the opinions in the article which he intends to read—

Mr. Caouette: Oh, no.

Mr. Nielsen: —he cannot read them into the record of this house. The rule is clear. The hon. member for Villeneuve knows what is in that press article, as I and many other members do because we were reading it in the lobbies. What is being attempted here is to read into the record statements which are now libellous but which will receive the cloak of immunity once they are read in this house.

Mr. Caouette: They are in the paper today.

Mr. Nielsen: That is fine, and if they are in the paper today that paper must take the responsibility for them and the possibility of having libel suits brought against it for the publication. But we in this house should not lend ourselves to abetting the creation of what constitutes libel by having the hon. member for Villeneuve read into the record something which has appeared in the press.

If the hon. member for Villeneuve wishes to take the responsibility of adopting those views as his own, let him read them into the record. As far as I am concerned there is nothing I am afraid to have read into the record. The hon. member must accept that responsibility and adopt those views as his own. He is afraid to do that, just as the minister is.