

already admitted his mistake in the House and has apologized to the House and to the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. The apology is on the record. I point out that the letters were tabled with the agreement of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Having carefully reviewed all of the procedural aspects of the question that has been raised, I have concluded that this is not a point of order. The issues are clearly related to propriety, etiquette and parliamentary ethics. May I remind the House that the Chair cannot rule on those issues, which are entirely the responsibility of each Hon. Member.

The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) also raised a point of order. I will rule on it also.

Following the procedural debate on the point of order that I have just ruled on, the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands raised a distinct point of order relating to discrepancies between the electronic record and the printed record of the debate. The Hon. Member referred quite rightly to Citations 155(1) and 155(2) of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition which govern our practice on matters such as the one she has raised.

Let me first emphasize that I have reviewed the "blues" and the editorial changes and can confirm that none of the alterations originated from the Minister of Finance. The editorial changes in question were done by the *Hansard* editor. Hon. Members will remember a recent ruling by my immediate predecessor involving editorial alterations to *Hansard* on an exchange between the Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin). Madam Speaker Sauvé then said:

I may remind Hon. Members that *Hansard* is not a verbatim transcript of the Debates. It is a transcript in extenso of the Debates and obviously, in the case of repetition or for a number of other reasons such as more specific identification, it is acceptable to make changes so that anyone reading *Hansard* will get the meaning of what was said.

The rule is that when Hon. Members correct their blues, they are not to change the substance or meaning of what they said but only try to improve comprehension of the text. That is the rule and the same rule applies to those who edit *Hansard*. They must not go beyond their obligation to make a sentence more readable, since there is, after all, some difference between the spoken and the written word.

On comparing the tapes and the blues in the present case, there appears to me one change of substance; that is the deletion of the words "in my back". Presumably that expression came from the French expression "dans mon dos" which would be more appropriately rendered in English as "behind my back". The Chair thinks that the editorial licence granted to *Hansard* may have been slightly exceeded, although in good faith, if that was what the Minister meant to say. If that was not what he meant, then the editor was right in his action since in English the expression "in my back" has no particular meaning. The Chair certainly does not want to rule on what Hon. Members mean when they use certain words or phrases in the course of debate. All Hon. Members will agree with me that the Chair has no editing function.

However, the point the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands raised is one of great consequence to this institution. Our British colleagues have dealt with this problem since the

### Order Paper Questions

introduction of radio broadcasting in their own House. They have decided that *Hansard* is the authoritative version of their debates. Our House, unfortunately, has not yet formally addressed this issue. It may be time for *Hansard* to become more and more a verbatim report with only exceptional editorial intervention. Alternatively, the House may wish to preserve the supremacy of *Hansard* over the electronic tapes since the latter are often inaudible and the House must rely on the judgment of the *Hansard* reporter on the floor of the House.

I respectfully suggest that that decision is not one for your Speaker and ought to be considered by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization since it now has a new mandate under our provisional rules.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### PETITIONS

#### MR. SARGEANT—TAXATION OF DISTILLERY PRODUCTS

**Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today on behalf of 288 of my constituents, most of whom are distillery workers or families and friends of those distillery workers. They are concerned about the unfair taxation of their product and the resulting loss of jobs at the plant at Gimli, Manitoba, and call upon Parliament to replace the system of automatically indexing excise taxes with a system which will permit a knowledgeable and realistic application of these duties.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

**Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 48, 82, 109, 120, 174 and 254.

[Text]

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE—RELOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

#### Question No. 48—Mr. Hnatyshyn:

1. Are the administrative offices of the Department of Agriculture, which are currently located in Saskatoon (that is the prairie regional headquarters of the research branch, the finance directorate of the finance and administration branch, the administration directorate and personnel) to be relocated within the year, in Regina, Saskatchewan and, if so (a) to what address or addresses (b) for what reason?

2. Was a tendering procedure followed in the selection of the building or buildings and, if so, what was it?