

Business of the House

Mr. Speaker: A question of privilege has been raised. Perhaps the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) could obtain the newspaper article from which he was apparently quoting and give it to the Chair. I will consider the matter and report back to the House.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to do so. I can only say to the Hon. Member that the Ukrainian Orthodox go to confession as well.

Ms. Copps: That is not the issue.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Perhaps the Hon. Member should read the report of the *Citizen* of November 5, which I will give to the Speaker. The newspaper refers to the following statement by former Prime Minister Trudeau:

He said, "In our religion, we have confession and I must confess that our Government did not do things it should have done".

That is the reference I was making. If the Hon. Member takes issue with that, she should talk to Mr. Trudeau.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, maybe I am naive and ignorant—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: —but I do not understand—

Mr. Jelinek: You got that right!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member may not have a question of privilege but the Hon. Member feels aggrieved and has a right to be heard.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I just do not understand and I would ask the Minister to clarify. He made a comment about his religion. What does my religion as a Roman Catholic or anyone else's religion have to do with the question that was asked by my hon. colleague, the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan)? It has absolutely nothing to do with it and I suggest that the Minister should not exacerbate the situation by making further religious references on an issue which should affect all Canadians.

Mr. Robinson: Point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) in a moment. In the meantime, the Hon. Minister of Justice has the floor.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, if this will satisfy the Hon. Member, I had absolutely no intention to impute motivations. There was no intention of trying to suggest any religious overtones with respect to the matter. I quoted the former Prime Minister. I hope the Hon. Member will understand that that was the intention and accept my word for it.

Mr. Nunziata: The record will speak for itself.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might provide some information on this matter as the only Member of Parliament

who was actually present at the meeting at which the former Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, made the comments in question.

The article to which the Minister of Justice referred is one source of information of what was supposed to have been an off the record briefing by the former Prime Minister. However, an article in the *Toronto Star* also refers to it. The former Prime Minister is quoted as stating:

I belong to a religion where, when we confess our sins, we confess not only what we did but what we failed to do—

In hearing my former parliamentarian Svend, I felt it was a good lesson for my soul when you realize the number of subjects we had failed to deal with.

In the context of that particular statement, I would suggest, with the greatest of respect, to my colleagues from the Liberal Party that they are blowing completely out of proportion the statement that was made.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has heard enough. I have the point. I will consider it. I will look at the article and report back to the House.

I might say that the Chair is cognizant of the fact that in this place things can be said, or there may be a misunderstanding of something that has been said, that can cause a lot of disappointment, dismay, and at times wound. I will look at it from that point of view. However, the Hon. Minister has stated quite clearly that that was not his intention, and it is more complicated because he was apparently giving the quote from his own memory, and we have heard another quote very much along the same lines. However, I will come back out of courtesy and respect to all Hon. Members and respond to the matters which have been raised.

There is no need, in the opinion of the Chair, to carry this matter any further.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have the customary question that is asked on Thursdays as to the intentions of the Government with respect to business that it wants to put before the House.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will commence consideration of Bill C-88, the Judges Act. If this Bill is not completed this afternoon, we will call it again for tomorrow. Following completion of Bill C-88, we will call Bill C-54, the Bill dealing with pornography.