

Privilege

If you look at page 106 of Beauchesne's, you will see—

Mr. Speaker: I can assist the Hon. Member. I do not need quotes from Beauchesne's. I accept the proposition that the Hon. Member for Windsor West is putting to me. He is a Member with very great experience in this House. The use of words "deliberate deception" is just like calling somebody a liar. I accept that. I do not need any quotes from Beauchesne's.

Would the Hon. Member complete his comments, please, for the assistance of the Chair?

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I also want to ask you to give attention to the use—earlier in the Question Period on a separate occasion—of the words "deliberately distort" by the Minister for International Trade. This has also been ruled on several occasions by distinguished predecessors to you, Mr. Speaker, to be unparliamentary. I therefore respectfully call on you to insist that the Minister withdraw, unequivocally and unreservedly, those words.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate those comments from the Hon. Member for Windsor West. The Hon. Minister has already, I think, dealt with at least part of the complaint, but I would hear the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, let us get this quite clear. I believe that there is a deliberate campaign by the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party deliberately to distort and deceive with reference to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. That is my position.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Now, if Your Honour feels that to say that is unparliamentary, I will withdraw it in this Chamber but I will repeat it outside the Chamber. There is no doubt in my mind that it is a campaign of deliberate distortion and deceit that is going on in this connection.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Minister to do this to assist the Chair. Whatever the Hon. Minister may think about the strategy or tactics of another Party, that may well be his or somebody else's opinion, but in this Chamber we cannot use those words about a Member. Perhaps the Hon. Minister could assist the Chair in making it clear that, whatever he may think of the strategy or tactics or pronunciations or campaign of another Party, he is not applying those words to any Hon. Member in the Chamber.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to make your task difficult, so I therefore withdraw the words that you say offend the rules.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East.

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED REMARKS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I am also rising on a question of privilege, and it deals with a false statement made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Clark). I am not going to debate the substance of most of what he said because most of what he said is certainly in my mind not true, but he definitely stated a falsehood about me when he said that my office had refused to have a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise).

In fact, the facts are as follows. We contacted the Prime Minister's Office to see if we could have a meeting with the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) so that he would follow through on his promise to the grape growers. He bounced us off to the office of the Minister of Agriculture, and the Minister of Agriculture was unavailable. We suggested that if a mutual time could be set up in the future for a meeting between the grape growers and the Minister of Agriculture, the grape growers would be very happy to come back to Ottawa. So, please, do not spread falsehoods.

Mr. Speaker: I wanted to say something on the past exchange. I understand that it is one of your colleagues who has been here for a good many years, and at times we all perhaps go beyond the mark, but I do want to thank Hon. Members for the way that they have dealt with this matter, and I thank the Hon. Minister for his complete withdrawal. I should have made a point of that before hearing the Hon. Member for Hamilton East. I apologize to Hon. Members and to the Minister for that.

However, I am now listening to the complaint of the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, and I recognize the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary in reply.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, perhaps it would be most useful in exchanges such as this one if various Members involved were to wait until they had a chance to see the "blues" in order to verify what was and was not said. Having said that, however, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) has risen and I think to some degree has put words in my mouth, but I will let the record speak to that itself.

What I said—and I chose my words very carefully—was that we as a Government were very much committed to a process of consultation with provincial governments and with producer groups. I reported to the House, through you, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Agriculture officials had offered to meet with the grape growers who had been referred