

*Privilege—Mr. Broadbent*

The Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) rises on a question of privilege.

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege—

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata) rises on a question of privilege. I will hear him, but I have indicated that I will hear the Hon. Member for Oshawa on his question of privilege of which I do have notice. I now have notice of another one, and I will keep the Hon. Member in mind.

The Hon. Member for Oshawa.

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### PRIVILEGE

#### CANADA-U.S. TRADE NEGOTIATIONS—ALLEGED CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I wrote to you earlier this day concerning my interpretation of a possibility of a question of privilege. I pointed out, Your Honour, in a letter to you, that certain statements made in the House of Commons by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade (Mr. McDermid) were in flat contradiction to statements that have been attributed to a senior trade official in the United States, specifically about an agreement that is alleged to have been made about the abolition of tariffs in the automotive sector in trade between Canada and the United States.

On the one hand the Parliamentary Secretary said on June 17 in the House that the subject matter has never even been discussed. On the other hand a senior American official has said something that is in flat contradiction to that, namely, not only has there been discussion but there has been an agreement reached.

If you should agree, Your Honour, that there is a prima facie case of privilege I am prepared to move the appropriate motion to have this matter referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, this is a matter which does in fact touch upon the privileges of all Members of the House. It is very important that we be in a position to obtain clear, definite and correct statements from Ministers in answer to our questions.

I think it is a serious matter when a Minister of the Crown says, in effect, that a senior official of a friendly government, in this case the Deputy U.S. Trade Commissioner, is providing inaccurate information to the staff of the legislative body to which this U.S. official is ultimately responsible. That would be serious enough in any event, but when we are talking as we are here of what the Minister for International Trade (Miss

Carney) should be saying in a clear and accurate way to Members of this House, then we have before us a very serious matter. This is so especially when it is clear that the Minister did not make a correct statement regarding the reality with respect to tariffs on automobile parts and finished automobiles coming from the United States.

I also wish to say in that regard that the House should know that it is the obligation of each individual auto company doing business in Canada pursuant to the Auto Pact to achieve the safeguard levels set for that company. Even if the over-all levels of production for the industry are far above what is required in total, if an individual company does not meet the safeguard levels then the duties are payable by that company. This has happened a number of times even though during those times the over-all safeguard levels had been met.

I think we have issues here which touch on the ability of all Members of the House to do their work properly, based on full and accurate information from the Government. Therefore I think we have an issue which creates a prima facie case of privilege.

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, I have two points which I would like to contribute to what I think is an extremely important point that has been raised by my Leader. The first is with respect to a statement which was made by the Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) on March 16, 1987. This is a statement reported at page 4178 of *Hansard* in which the Minister said:

Tariffs are on the table because experience has shown that the Canadian economy has prospered through tariff reduction. This is so even with the Auto Pact which the Opposition keeps bringing up.

My clear interpretation of that statement is that the Auto Pact and reduction of tariffs affecting the Auto Pact are very much under discussion. That would seem to represent a clear contradiction to the statement made by the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary last week.

The second point which has to be stressed very strongly is that the memorandum, which could be tabled in the House if it were useful, is a memorandum which we ourselves checked through our office this morning in order to determine its authenticity. We checked with the organization which represents the coalition of over 200 American Congressmen and 38 American Senators who represent the Midwest and the northeastern United States. It was clear from the conversation with staff representatives of the organization that, indeed, the briefing which is reported in the memorandum did take place. It was carried out by Mr. Merkin and dealt with the precise points which the memorandum itself outlines in an abbreviated form for purposes of congressional offices.

I think that on those grounds and on the grounds of contradiction between the Minister and her Parliamentary Secretary there is a serious case here of confusion and, certainly, an attempt to avoid giving a clear picture to the House of Commons and to its Members of what is taking place. As one Member who represents a constituency which