

Official Report

And that was the sense of the exchange yesterday, Mr. Speaker. That is what was intended, and while I do not intend to get into the exchange which took place between the Minister and the Leader of the Opposition before coming into the House that day, I am sure the Minister will recall the bantering which took place between herself and the Leader of the Opposition before coming into the House which gave rise to the term "accouche" in the first place.

Miss Bégin: That is not true. I did not say that.

Mr. Nielsen: However, I can assure the Minister that that was the sense in which the exchange was generated—"Get it out, spit it out, bring it forth, cough it up, get on with it!" It is often used in this House. Again, I want to reassure the Minister of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has the highest respect for her and has been trying to get in touch with her since last Tuesday to tell her that personally.

The serious part of the whole matter, Sir, is the alteration of *Hansard* to the extent which occurred. I have no doubt that the intentions of the editors of French *Hansard* were of the best. However, I think that what happened here went a little beyond what is usually accepted as permissible in the privilege of Hon. Members to make alterations in *Hansard*. I would also suggest that in future when editorial changes are made to the text, they should then be resubmitted to Hon. Members for their checking, because in this instance that extensively altered passage was not resubmitted to the Leader of the Opposition, or to his staff, for double checking. It seems to me only fair, so that Hon. Members can judge whether an editorial insertion is in keeping with what they feel they said in the House, that those "blues" should be resubmitted to the Hon. Member concerned before they are printed in final form.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair will recognize the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen). However, my first reaction is that we hope this matter could be terminated without too much further extension of comment and debate. The Chair will certainly look into the matter of the allegations with regard to *Hansard*.

The Hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, without wishing to dwell on the impropriety and heavy-handedness of the incident that took place in the House, I would like to make it clear that since the House resumed its sittings, I have never met the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) before going into Oral Question Period. I accept apologies when they are due, but I also am very particular about the truth.

[*English*]

Hon. Bud Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated when I raised this issue originally, I did not raise it under a question of privilege nor a point of order. I simply

wanted to call it to the attention of the House. I did not, frankly, want to make it a *cause célèbre*, as it seems to have become.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair would like to observe that the Chair is concerned about the use of this new Standing Order in this way. If a matter is truly a matter of a point of order, it is perhaps preferable to raise it as such.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to do what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) has indicated he wanted to do, bring a little civility to the situation. I tried to soft pedal it by simply calling to the attention of the House the fact that *Hansard* is not to be altered. I believe the House leader for the Official Opposition has indicated that there have been extensive changes. I indicated a couple of things, one, that I thought that someone had made the alteration. I believe it goes a little bit beyond changing a word. I felt the sense of it has been changed. Certainly, for Michèle Tremblay, who writes for *Le Journal de Montréal*, and Mr. Michel Gratton, who writes for *Le Droit*, there was no question in their minds about what the meaning of this vulgar phrase was. That is the terminology which has been given to it. However, all I asked for was an indication or acknowledgment that *Hansard* had been changed, that that was not what was appropriate and that either an explanation or an apology should be given. I think that has been done.

I commend the House leader for the Official Opposition for trying to make the best of a poor case. I think he has done the best he could. I do not want to extend it, either, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure you in the future that if extensive changes like this are made by the Leader of the Opposition, or anyone else, I will raise it on a point of order.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen) obviously did not hear me. I said on more than one occasion in raising this point of order that there were no changes made by the Leader of the Opposition, either in the French "blues" or the English "blues". We did not even have an opportunity to see the English "blues". Nor were any changes made by any member of the staff of the Leader of the Opposition. The changes which were made, all of them, both in the French text and the English text of the "blues", were made by the editors of French *Hansard* in the one case and by the translators in the other case, not by the Leader of the Opposition or any of his staff.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I must say I do accept what the House Leader for the Opposition says. He says it was not changed by the staff; it was not changed by the Leader of the Opposition. I accept that because we accept Hon. Members' words in the House. That is the way we bring civility to this place. I am quite prepared to accept that the change was not made by the Leader of the Official Opposition. It just seems to me that *Hansard* went a little bit further in editorializing here, not changing words but changing meaning.