

**Mr. Kaplan:** As I have the floor, I hope I will have the opportunity of being heard.

In his letter today, the Prime Minister continued to assert that I was responsible for the authorization of that payment because it was made by a senior officer of the RCMP for whom I was responsible to Parliament.

In reply to the statement which was made by the Prime Minister, I would like to remind him that, in fact, RCMP officers who investigated the case were acting on a matter which was of provincial responsibility. They were paid by a provincial contract. They were reporting to the Attorney General, and it was not the Attorney General—

**Mr. Speaker:** I have given the Hon. Member some time to tell the House what it his question of privilege. I would now invite him to do so. I appreciate the seriousness and importance of the matter to everyone who is concerned, but would the Member please bring it into the context of privilege.

**Mr. Kaplan:** Mr. Speaker, I submit that the Prime Minister should withdraw the remarks which damage my reputation.

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, that is clearly not a question of privilege. I do not understand what the Hon. Member hopes to accomplish by raising the matter under the guise of a question of privilege.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) had the grace and decency to stand in his place and withdraw categorically any implication with respect to the statement which was made yesterday. I have the letter here. If the Hon. Member who is new in this House, and probably does not know the rules, would look at Beauchesne's Citation 19(1), he will understand—

● (1520)

**Mr. Ouellet:** You are the House Leader and you should know better.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** —that a difference in facts is certainly not a basis for a question of privilege. There is no question of privilege here. Moreover, the Prime Minister stood in his place on the floor of the House—and, Mr. Speaker, you heard him today in Question Period—and said that he withdrew absolutely the reference made on the floor of the House yesterday with respect to this matter. And, Mr. Speaker, he apologized.

If the Hon. Member had any sense of decency in this House, he would leave things alone; he would leave it at that.

**Mr. Kaplan:** I would accept an apology from the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), but this is no apology.

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the Hon. Member's question of privilege. I am sure that if the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) would add to what he said in the House earlier today, a withdrawal of this letter, which is not an apology, the Hon. Member would accept that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

*Privilege—Mr. Kaplan*

**Mr. Andre:** What kind of garbage is this? You're despicable.

**Mr. Gauthier:** He is despicable.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Rossi:** Who do you think you are?

**Mr. Speaker:** It does not seem to matter how many times I say to the House that there is language which is proper for this place and language which is not. It just does not seem to matter on both sides.

**Mr. Rossi:** He is the one who said it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. This is not some place where people yell at each other. This is supposed to be a house of civilized, principled debate.

**Mr. de Jong:** The press are laughing.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I didn't say it was. I said it was supposed to be. I hope, for the last time, to read Citation 19(1) from Beauchesne to Hon. Members. Beauchesne reads:

A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

The question of privilege of the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) arises out of yesterday's Question Period. It arises, I take it, out of a concern he has with a statement which was made and which, apparently, in his view is unfactual, and later admitted to be that by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). Whether withdrawn or not, the factual dispute is not a question of privilege, ever. I suggest to Hon. Members that, under the circumstances, I have been given nothing to reserve on except the question of a putative letter of apology, and I am faced at the same time with a verbal apology issued during Question Period.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** With a letter on record.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is no letter on record.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** It is.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member had the opportunity, in presenting his question of privilege, to submit to me the letter. He neither submitted it to me in writing nor did he indicate during his question of privilege that he intended to submit it to the House. I have no evidence. Even if I did have the letter, it would still come back to a question of fact, and I believe the right hon. gentleman knows that. It is a matter of procedure.

I appreciate that it is a difficult moment between Hon. Members in the House. But I ask Hon. Members to accept the position which the Speaker is in on this question, and who apparently is entering into what the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) quite properly referred to yesterday as "editorializing", and I think I will leave it at this point.

**Mr. Mulroney:** May I just say that I had the opportunity earlier in the House of conveying my apology to my hon.