

Point of Order—Mr. Crosbie

be substantiated by way of memoranda from the Department—

Mr. Speaker: I might say to the Hon. Member for York South—Weston that I think the Chair has fully appreciated the Hon. Member's argument and I think the Hon. Member has put his case as well as it can be put.

I am suggesting that the Hon. Member make clear that he did not mean that the Minister had in any way intentionally misled, and he might even go so far as to say that on that particular day that is not what the Minister said, as the Minister has read from *Hansard* and that is clear. At the same time, it might be very appropriate if the Minister would say under the circumstances that he might be prepared to withdraw any suggestion that the Hon. Member has intentionally misled the House.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, if I might have the opportunity, I know it is against parliamentary rules to suggest either directly or indirectly that a Member is either lying or deliberately misleading the House. If I might explain, I was basing the question I asked on several written memoranda from the Department. In view of the fact that the Minister speaks for the Government and is responsible for his Department, the Minister should assume responsibility for what happens in his Department.

Having said that, I will withdraw unequivocally any suggestion, either directly or indirectly, that the Minister intentionally misled the House. If anything, the Minister is guilty of gross negligence and of not knowing his dossier.

Mr. Speaker: The statement of the Hon. Member for York South-Weston is quite clear. There is no suggestion that the Minister has in any way intentionally misled the House. His explanation for having said what he said is that he had in mind a number of different responses or at least alleged different responses. Under the circumstances, I would hear from the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, first I suppose I want to observe the rules of the House, so I withdraw what I said about the Hon. Member in the interests of observing the rules of the House. However, this is a most serious matter. If we cannot trust what other Members are saying that we said when we are not in this House, as I was not in the House on Friday, then this House will deteriorate to a completely hopeless situation. This will happen if we cannot trust another Member to treat us decently, properly, honourably and accurately when we are not present in the House.

On April 14, I never said, nor have I at any time said, as I am quoted as having said, that there would be few if any jobs lost. To have an Hon. Member introduce a question by saying

that is to permit a false statement to be made, a statement which the Member knows is false, and there is no point in saying that he read a memo from somewhere else.

By the way, the memo of which he speaks is a memo from the Department of Employment and Immigration, not a memo from my Department. It has nothing to do with ministerial responsibility. One Member of the House has falsely said that I said certain things in the House I did not say.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Minister to graciously accept that the Chair has heard the complaint. I have treated the complaint as serious. It is not the first time it has been heard and probably it will not be the last, but the Hon. Member has gone a long way toward putting his point in a satisfactory position as far as the Chair is concerned.

The Hon. Minister has properly withdrawn that one word which is not acceptable. The Hon. Minister has also pointed out, and the Minister's word is accepted in this place, that he did not say what the Hon. Member thought he had said or claimed he had said.

I am not for one minute diminishing the seriousness of preambles or, for that matter, responses which put words in someone else's mouth, whether it be sometimes intentionally, and sometimes without intention to do much harm, but perhaps some mischief. In any event, the matter has been heard and I really do not think that the Chair can go any further in the case. There are withdrawals on both sides and that is where the Chair wishes it to be left. The Chair is very cognizant of the matter the Hon. Minister has raised and has listened to both sides carefully. I thank both Hon. Members for their interventions.

Mr. Crosbie: In deference to you, Your Honour, I will accept that, but that is only in deference to your good self.

It is a disgrace, a damnable disgrace.

Mr. Nunziata: Go home, John.

Mr. Shields: You're a sick man. You lowered the level of this House.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask Hon. Members to assist the Chair. It is for the Chair to settle these matters. They are not assisted by comments made afterward. All of us in this place have at times cause or at least think we have cause to say things that perhaps afterwards we would not have said in quite the same way.

I think all Hon. Members realize that the Chair's task is to hear and to admonish if necessary and hopefully to obtain withdrawals when necessary. In the Chair's view, that has been done. I am sure all Hon. Members would be more careful.