

● (1500)

PETITIONS

MR. HERBERT—NORMALIZATION OF SITUATION OF MISS CILÉ MERVIL IN CANADA

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) on Monday, September 19, meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

MR. McDERMID—FOREIGN AID—DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TAMIL POPULATION

Madam Speaker: The petition presented by the Hon. Member for Brampton-Georgetown (Mr. McDermid) on Monday, September 19, does not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. McGRATH—S.O. 21 STATEMENT OF MR. CULLEN—RULING OF MADAM SPEAKER

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would like to make a few remarks on the point of order raised in the House by the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) concerning a statement made by the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen) under Standing Order 21.

I believe at the time the statement was made I said to the House that it seemed to me the particular statement was in order. However, having reread it in *Hansard*, it seems to me that it was extremely borderline and that perhaps it would have been better dealt with under a point of order, since the major complaint of the Hon. Member was that some modifications had been made to *Hansard*. However, Hon. Members had a chance to reply and to rebut, so I am satisfied that no Member has been frustrated in his right to express his views.

I thank Hon. Members for pointing out this particular case. It is not always easy for the Chair to know what will be the conclusion of an Hon. Member's statement. Some preambles to the questions they want to raise are longer than others. Sometimes the Chair waits patiently and realizes that perhaps the statement was not entirely in order. However, with the help of the House from time to time, I will be able to maintain the objectives of that particular Standing Order. I think we are doing pretty well under it. I will try to check Hon. Members sooner, although I am very reluctant to intervene too soon because I like to give Hon. Members a chance to express themselves.

[Translation]

Regarding the point of order raised by the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) in which he protested changes made in *Hansard*, saying that they went well beyond those allowed in the course of normal editing, I realize that the Hon. Member is not questioning the impartiality or integrity of those who are

Point of Order—Mr. McGrath

assigned to transcribe and revise the *Debates*, but he nevertheless implied, as did the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen) in his statement, that the changes made in the transcript went well beyond the limits allowed in editing *Hansard*. I may remind Hon. Members that *Hansard* is not a verbatim transcript of the *Debates*. It is a transcript *in extenso* of the *Debates* and obviously, in the case of repetition or for a number of other reasons such as more specific identification, it is acceptable to make changes so that anyone reading *Hansard* will get the meaning of what was said.

The rule is that when Hon. Members correct their blues, they are not to change the substance or meaning of what they said but only try to improve comprehension of the text. That is the rule and the same rule applies to those who edit *Hansard*. They must not go beyond their obligation to make a sentence more readable, since there is, after all, some difference between the spoken and the written word.

After reviewing the record and considering the comments made in the House on the days following the occurrence, the Chair is of the opinion that *Hansard* of Tuesday, September 13, provides, in both versions, a full and objective account of the proceedings. The substance was not materially changed, and the form is the prescribed one. Hon. Members will be aware that calling someone by name in the House is not permitted, certainly not by the person's first name, for the very simple reason that we must know who is meant. There might be three or four Moniques, and we might have five or six Erics, but we only have one of those, no doubt about that. And we do not need more than one.

The editors of *Hansard* have to change the text so that the reader knows who is meant. In the present case, we had someone who was called by her first name. It was therefore necessary to identify that person as being the Minister of National Health and Welfare. There was also the element of repetition, and furthermore, the sentence was very short. Usually we delete repetitions. When a person is speaking, there is of course a tendency to say the same thing twice, but these repetitions are not reproduced in *Hansard*. For all the reasons mentioned, the editors of *Hansard* did the best they could in the circumstances. I looked at the text from every possible angle, but I really do not see how I could have improved on what was produced in the final editing. In my opinion, the final edition of *Hansard*, considering the freedom given the editors, is objective and was done in the best interests of the House.

The Hon. Member for Yukon suggests that we resubmit the blues to Hon. Members if the editors feel that substantial corrections are necessary. Now we may do that in cases where there is a reasonable doubt, but this will complicate the work of the *Hansard* editors enormously and also delay the printing and translation of *Hansard*. So, if Hon. Members agree, and considering the fact that incidents of this nature are rather uncommon, we shall continue to trust our editors.