

• (1520)

POINT OF ORDER

EXCELLENCE OF CANADIAN WINES

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was in the great riding of Niagara Falls where I had the pleasure of enjoying some beautiful Canadian champagne. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, my surprise when today, in response to a question, I heard the Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark) referring to Canadian wine from the Niagara Peninsula as "Canadian bath water".

I believe it is an indication of the Government's attitude. I am not surprised that the Minister, after having been lobbied vigorously by the Niagara Grape Growers Action Committee to at start at least getting Canadian wine into Canadian embassies, has failed to do so. Quite obviously his elitist Gucci taste does not include drinking the great wine of the Niagara Peninsula.

I see that the Minister is back in his place. I would like to hear him respond. I hope silent members on the Conservative side representing the Niagara Peninsula will also add their voices in concern to set the Minister straight on the beautiful nature of Canadian champagne.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this is not a point of order, as you will undoubtedly rule, but let me take the opportunity to indicate that the use by the Department of External Affairs at home and abroad of Canadian wine has increased dramatically since the election of the Progressive Conservative Government. Its use is considerably more extensive than it was when the country was unfortunately in the hands of the Liberal Government with its Gucci and French wine tastes.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair can completely understand why any Hon. Member who comes from a wine producing part of the country would seek zealously to affirm the fine reputation of Canadian wines.

The Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) has indeed indicated in his response that the fine reputation of Canadian wines is accepted by his own Department and that Canadian wines are being used to a greater extent than at some other time.

I think the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) would both agree that this is an interesting matter of information for Members and of debate, but not a point of order.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I rise very briefly on a separate point of order.

I accept Your Honour's ruling that this is not a point of order, but you will understand that this debate will be fermenting for many months to come.

Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez

Mr. Speaker: I might indicate that the Chair has already had a taste of it.

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PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH STANDING ORDER 99(2)— MR. SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling of interest to the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) and some other Hon. Members.

[*Translation*]

I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on May 26 by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) about the Government's response to a committee report. This is not the first such complaint, and while it does not come under the heading of privilege itself, I thought it appropriate to have this matter fully aired. The Hon. Member for Nickel Belt was not alone in feeling injured and the taking of firm positions on this matter was not restricted to a single party, as shown by the intervention of the Hon. Member for La Prairie (Mr. Jourdenais).

[*English*]

The issue, while it cannot be classed as one of privilege, constitutes a valid point of order as it calls for an interpretation of a standing order. Standing Order 99(2) reads:

Within 150 days of the presentation of a report from a standing or special committee, the government shall, upon the request of the committee, table a comprehensive response thereto.

The Hon. Member for Nickel Belt claimed that the Government had failed to provide a comprehensive response to the report concerned, and his case appeared to hinge on the interpretation of the word "comprehensive", which he described as the operative word.

[*Translation*]

I mentioned the statement made by the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) on May 15. We concluded in these terms, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each member of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration for their work on the Unemployment Insurance Program.

Their report was most helpful in our consideration of not only the current program but the other proposals for reform we received. The committee suggested we consider its recommendations as a package and we have done so.

I am tabling today a letter to the Chairman of the Standing Committee reflecting the contents of my statement which will serve as the Government's response to the Report in accordance with the Standing Orders.

It seems that those paragraphs and the letter tabled in this House were the response of the Government to the Committee report.