

Privilege—Mr. Stanfield

support the policy. I will not get into that policy. I simply want to say that I have one concern. I know the minister and every member of this House has this concern. It is not in the policy. There should be a policy that also supports shelter for low and moderate income tenants. If the government of the day spent time on that, it would be appropriate. I therefore ask that the minister withdraw his remark with regard to my views on the policy. He knows I support it.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the hon. member has just withdrawn the words that I deliberately misrepresented his point of view. I am more at ease now to indicate to him and the House through you, Mr. Speaker, that my remarks were based on a Canadian Press report of September 29, which stated:

David Crombie, former Toronto mayor and a Progressive Conservative candidate in a federal by-election, says a Conservative proposal to allow income tax deductions for mortgage payments and property tax requires further thought.

I guess that the representative of Canadian Press felt at that time that the candidate wanted to review the matter further because he probably had a number of misconceptions about the scheme.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ouellet: If the hon. member has now decided to change his mind, if in the first place he was having doubt about that scheme and now he has no doubt, that is up to him. However, it is too bad that he changes his mind now that he is a member of the Conservative party.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Rosedale was given the floor and an opportunity to indicate that the minister should be corrected if the minister was describing his position as being opposed to a particular policy. The hon. member took the opportunity to indicate that he is not opposed to the policy, and has set the record straight. The minister indicated the source of his remarks. While the clarification of that is not entire, I do not see that procedurally there is anything I can do about it in the circumstances.

MR. STANFIELD—MINISTER'S REPLY ON PURCHASE OF SHARES
IN PACIFIC PETROLEUMS LTD. BY PETRO-CANADA

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is that on November 13 the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) gave me one answer to a question. Today he gave me the opposite answer to the same question. I will try to develop this as quickly as I can. On November 13 I asked the minister:

Is the minister saying, in connection with the Petro-Can purchase and the financial transactions involved, that there is absolutely no financial responsibility on the part of the federal government? Is he saying, not only that the federal government did not engage in any express guarantee, but that by virtue of Petro-Can being an agent of the government, and the implications of that under the Financial Administration Act, there is no financial responsibility on the

[Mr. Crombie.]

Government of Canada in connection with this transaction by way of guarantee or otherwise?

The answer I got clearly indicated there was no financial responsibility.

Mr. Gillespie: That was not my answer. Read my answer.

Mr. Stanfield: I will deal with the minister, Mr. Speaker. I say he answered my question clearly in the negative. He said there were no government guarantees. That is true. That is not the question he was asked. He answered in such a way as clearly to try to give the impression that there was no financial responsibility.

He continued through the discussion we had yesterday. He referred specifically to my question. He said:

There is no question that Petro-Canada as an agent of Her Majesty is covered, as are other Crown corporations, by the Financial Administration Act.

He did not say what the effect of that was, in his view. He continued:

That is common knowledge and is not in question. But I was asked by the hon. member for Halifax whether or not there were any expressed guarantees by the federal government. I would refer the House to *Hansard*, page 1050, I believe, in which yesterday's debate is reported. That is a fair question, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday he was pretending I was asking him the day before whether there were any guarantees. It was not just feeling around in the air. He referred specifically to my question and the text of it. There can be no possible doubt that he was asked on Monday whether there was any financial responsibility by way of guarantees or otherwise. I repeat, there can be no doubt as to the impression he intended to leave.

Yesterday Your Honour indicated you had some difficulties with a question of privilege like this. You stated:

● (1512)

If I were to try to make a decision, I have to make a substantive decision on the basis of facts as to what set of facts is correct. Essentially, that is a disagreement on facts, but often, to resolve it, the test the Chair has to apply is whether it is a disagreement as to facts or a question of privilege by virtue of an attempt to mislead.

I suggest there is no problem about the facts. The facts are there. They are on record in *Hansard*. The question I asked on Monday and the answer I received is there; the question I asked today and the answer I got will be in *Hansard* in due course. They will be on the "blues".

You went on to state yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that there was a further difficulty:

If the Chair finds itself in the position of having to make a decision between the two sides on an interpretation of facts, that is enough for the Chair to surrender the question of privilege and say that on procedural grounds, and in the circumstances, I have no jurisdiction. The difficulty is even more severe here because we are not even arguing about a question of facts but rather about an interpretation of the statutes. Therefore, the matter seems to place upon the Chair the obligation of not only deciding on the correctness of facts but also of making a judgment as to which argument is correct under the law.

I accepted that, Mr. Speaker. That caused me a great deal of concern yesterday and I felt I could not properly ask you to take a position with respect to the law. But in the light of the