

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGATION BY SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANT—REISMAN—MR. SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I should like to deliver a brief ruling. On October 30, 1987, the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) rose to express his view that his privilege as a Member of Parliament had been breached when Canada's Ambassador and Chief Negotiator for Trade with the United States was reported to have likened opponents to free trade to Nazis. The Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) also found offence in the report of Ambassador Reisman's remarks.

The Chair has had an opportunity to review the matter and must point out to the House that, as stated at the time by the Hon. Minister of State (Mr. Lewis), comments made outside the House are not likely to prevent Members from doing their jobs properly, which as Hon. Members know is the essence of privilege.

It is very important, again to the public who are watching and listening, to indicate that something can be inflammatory, can be disagreeable, and can even be offensive, but it may not be a question of privilege unless the comment actually impinges upon the ability of Members of Parliament to do their job properly.

Without belabouring the point, I would refer Hon. Members briefly to a decision by Mr. Speaker Lamoureux on April 29, 1971, when he said in part:

In my view, parliamentary privilege does not go much beyond the right of free speech in the House of Commons and the right of a member to discharge his duties in the House as a member of the House of Commons.

Hon. Members will understand, of course, that the position taken by the Chair in no way condones the sort of language attributed to Ambassador Reisman. However his remarks, whatever they may have been, remain beyond the scope of the privileges of this House.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED ASSOCIATION BY MINISTER WITH UNACCEPTABLE REMARKS—MR. SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The very same day, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Mrs. Copps) rose on a question of privilege, separate but connected, interpreting the statements made by the Minister of Internal Trade (Mrs. Carney) during the Question Period as an indication that she was supporting the comments made by Ambassador Reisman.

[English]

I have carefully examined the official report of that day's Debates and I find that what was said, at least in the opinion of the Chair, does not amount to evidence of that suggestion.

Petitions

● (1620)

I thank Hon. Members again for their interventions. I hope my comments today have helped clarify the matter.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CORPORATIONS AND LABOUR UNIONS RETURNS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Jake Epp (for Minister of Supply and Services) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-91, an Act to amend the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the Hon. Minister have leave to introduce the Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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[Translation]

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to table in the House a petition with 272 signatures which are to be added to the other 30,463 which I have already tabled. The petitioners are residents of Chibougamau, Dolbeau, Saint-Gédéon, Saint-Prime, Roberval, Magog, Saint-Tite, Cap-Desrosiers, LaSalle, Métabetchouan, Sherbrooke, Saint-Félicien, Albanel, Gaspé, Lac Mégantic, Joliette, Alma, Verdun, Laval, Sainte-Foy, Murdochville, Montreal, Shawinigan, Grand-Mère, Matapédia, Mistassini, Trois-Rivières.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are asking Parliament to make it compulsory for car manufacturers to install inflatable air bags to protect front seat drivers, and to provide backseat drivers with adjustable combination lap-shoulder safety belts.

[English]

OPPOSITION TO THE PURCHASE OF NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINES

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a duly certified petition with several hundred names on it coming mostly from Port Alberni, but also from a number of other British Columbia communities on the coast including Victoria, Powell River, Mansons Landing, Vancouver, Qualicum, Courtenay, Campbell River, Nanaimo, Tahsis,