

Privilege

crazy. I cannot support her in this. This is hardly what we would call an assault”.

Mr. Speaker, again I publicly say that is what happened. I absolutely meant no harm or any threat as the member has said. We need to get on with this. Again, I do accept the challenge she has issued to me. I certainly would be willing to go down to her riding and will be in contact with her staff to see if we can get a good political debate going. Or she is certainly welcome to come to Beaver River and we will talk about that.

The issue here is the fact that I did take her arm but it was certainly not a threat. It was something that just happened. When she whirled around in a great hurry I did grab her right elbow and I certainly acknowledge that. I appreciate the fact that we can move forward from this. Certainly when we get into the heat of political debate, it is unfortunate it is the MP pension plan which escalated to this height. However, I trust that we can certainly put this behind us now and move forward.

• (1825)

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of privilege, I will make some comments as I was a witness to what occurred in this incident.

I did go over and I noticed you were standing. I asked the two members to lower their voices because it was getting a little bit loud and it was hard for other members to listen to the debate that was going on.

The member for Madawaska—Victoria is going to great lengths to build a case. I believe with all due respect, and I do not want to any way diminish her concerns that she was not treated with respect, but the exchange I heard was on an equal basis. Whatever level it was at, it was on an equal basis.

There was no molestation with respect to her reference from 1780. Also there was no assault. There was no physical threat. The comment I did hear, and I saw what was happening, was to get her out of here and whatever. The member for Beaver River I thought just grabbed her arm and said: “Come on”. Let us smarten up kind of thing is the impression I got from that comment.

The debate did heat up to a high exchange. I think both members have an extremely different point of view on the pension plan. I recommend both members recognize they have a severe difference of opinion and that with respect they basically agree to disagree.

For you, Mr. Speaker, to have to rule on this, I think you should hear from anyone else who wishes to contribute. I do know the member for Huron—Bruce was present as a witness. He can speak for himself as to what he saw.

In my humble opinion, with it being my responsibility to make sure that members do respect each other, I know they disagreed, but in my opinion there was no assault, no physical threat. There was no intent to injure. There was no intent for bodily harm. I really believe it was a war of words and that was it.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of what was being debated. One hon. member as a result of the debate in the House was not satisfied. She had made her points wanted to carry on and did come to this spot. I was sitting here beside where the event took place between the two members.

There is a very important point to clarify. I agree fully with the facts as laid out by the hon. member. Her comment was to the Reform Party whip, not to the member as the member said. The member is incorrect. The member for Madawaska—Victoria had indicated to the Reform Party whip to get her out of here because I had got your attention, Mr. Speaker, to rise because of the sound level of the conversation. The member was clearly aware that it was not going anywhere and tried to leave the conversation. She very calmly tried to leave the conversation, at which point the member for Beaver River in all fairness and with due respect for the member, was not going to allow the matter to finish and wanted to impose her position even further on the member.

I was quite disturbed with the whole incident. Although I am not a lawyer my impression of what went on here was that the member for Beaver River had come to harass and impose herself upon the member who has made this complaint and was not prepared to let it go until she had won and imposed her view. I think that is the issue before us. There was a physical contact. There was an attempt to carry on something the member clearly wanted to just get out of.

• (1830)

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I may, hopefully in order to establish good harmony between members, I would ask if the House could not see the clock for ten minutes or so in order that we can end the conversation. I think it would be helpful for the House as a whole to sit an extra ten minutes to conclude the matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Colleagues, given the seriousness of the matter it certainly would be my intention to hear whatever additional information might ultimately assist the Chair in this matter, and I will not see the clock.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring a few points to the attention of the Chair.