

Hansard—Altering of Report

me what, in fact, the alterations were. But it was precisely because no pressure was put on me—

Mr. Hodgson: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Victoria, Ontario (Mr. Hodgson) makes an exclamation which indicates that he does not accept what I say, namely that there was no pressure brought to bear. I am not going to quarrel with hon. members. I state upon my honour as Speaker of the House of Commons that never at any time was any pressure put on me with respect to this matter. The circumstances were exactly as I have explained them to the house. I was standing up in my office. My two guests were right there when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) walked in. I introduced him to my two guests, two parliamentarians from New Zealand.

It was at that moment that he indicated that there were some figures that he wanted to have deleted from *Hansard* in the interests of accuracy, and then he went on to indicate that if they were allowed to remain, there was some implication that some institutions in the province of Quebec would be guilty of a certain crime. At that moment it appeared to me to be a reasonable suggestion. That is all there was to it. The minister went upstairs and I phoned *Hansard*. That is the whole picture. There was nothing else. I swear to that. What I say now I would say under oath before any committee.

Some hon. members seem to feel it is peculiar that the editor of debates should refer an hon. member to me. The Minister of Agriculture is not the only one who has been referred to me. There are other members in this house at whom I am looking right now who have been referred to me by the editor of debates. During the last recess, when I was discussing matters of administration with the associate editor of debates—I am referring now to Mr. Buskard—he told me that sometimes he was having certain difficulties because he found that members, in revising their copy, were putting in too much or deleting too much. He said to me, "What is my order of reference? It is a difficult matter. Pressure is being put on me to make exceptions".

It was precisely in order to help him to resist that kind of pressure that I advised him as I did. I think hon. members know—in view of several requests that are being placed before me from time to time with regard to different matters—that I know how to resist or how to say no. I think hon. members know that. It was precisely in

[Mr. Speaker.]

order to help that employee of ours that I told him this: "Hold the line; and if some difficulty comes along, refer it to me". It is for that reason that the Minister of Agriculture was obliged to come to see me. Where I failed in performing my duty as I should have performed it, in my opinion, was in not telling the Minister of Agriculture, "Will you please wait for me; I will let my two guests leave and then we can talk this matter over, call the editor of debates, bring him down here and look at the words that were to be deleted." If I had been able to consider them then, my reply to the Minister of Agriculture would have been no. That is my position.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) has made quite a case of the intervention of Mr. Mackenzie King in 1933 when Mr. Speaker Black had expunged from *Hansard* an expression which he considered to be objectionable and which had been attributed to Mr. Pouliot. The expression was that Mr. Pouliot had called another person a clown. That was a matter that had to do with disrespectful language or unparliamentary language. The expression was:

. . . I did not object for the reason that clowns are never taken seriously, . . .

That is the expression that was used by Mr. Pouliot, at page 3749 of *Hansard* of April 5, 1933. It is that expression which Mr. Speaker Black ordered outside of the house to be expunged. It is that sort of action to which Mr. King took objection and to which he referred to his remarks at page 3805 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to take exception to what Your Honour may have done in the way of expunging possible objectionable phrases from *Hansard* . . .

He referred there, as did Mr. Speaker Black at page 3855 of *Hansard*, to objectionable phrases which the Speaker may order to have expunged in the house because they offend the provisions of standing order 35. This is a different matter altogether. If hon. members assume for one moment that we are dealing in this case with alterations that deal only with minor revisions, and therefore purely a matter of editing, no hon. member will contend for one second that, in the very narrow limits of revision permitted under editing action, the Speaker, if his advice is sought by the editor of debates, must come to the house to make his ruling.

If, as in this case, it goes beyond the mere editing permitted, then of course it is a different matter. It is for that reason I am glad the matter is being aired in the manner that it is. I repeat that if I have done anything wrong which is not in accordance with