

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 15, 1965

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS

#### PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF FIGURE SKATING CHAMPIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** I should like to call the attention of all hon. members to some very distinguished younger guests whom we have in the ladies' gallery and the Speaker's gallery today.

We are happy to have with us quite a few world champion figure skaters. In the Speaker's gallery, representing Canada, is Miss Petra Burka, the world ladies figure skating champion. From Russia we have Mr. and Mrs. Oleg Protopopov, the world pairs figure skating champions. From Czechoslovakia we have Miss Eva Romanova and Pavel Roman, who are brother and sister, the world dance figure skating champions. We are delighted to have them with us.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. THOMPSON—LETTER TO MR. SPEAKER ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

**Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of personal privilege regarding a letter which I wrote to Your Honour on October 4, 1963, following my return from New Zealand and Australia, outlining some of my observations on the manner in which the parliaments in Canberra and Wellington carry on their procedures. I have not made any statement to the public or to the press, nor have I written any subsequent letter to Your Honour about this subject as reported in a press release across the nation on Saturday.

Knowing of your great interest and concern in the reform of parliamentary procedure, I wrote to you giving my impressions of what I had observed in Australia and New Zealand. In this regard I must commend Your Honour for the reports of your special committee and the commendable work which has been done, the results of which have been outlined in the various reports submitted to

this house. I regard the fifteenth report of the committee on procedure and organization, which is now before this house, as the most important and wide reaching of all. I trust that it will be favourably received and adopted this session.

I first heard of the Saturday news report when a reporter from my home town paper, the *Red Deer Advocate*, telephoned me yesterday asking for verification and enlargement of this press statement. The statement, as he read it to me, indicated that I had suggested elimination of the \$6,000 tax free expense allowance now paid to members of parliament, believing that in so doing a great deal would be accomplished toward restoring parliament's public image.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I must categorically deny that I ever recommended the elimination of a member of parliament's expense allowance. I know all too well personally that this allowance is not more than adequate to cover the expenses of a member of this house who conscientiously endeavours to fulfil his responsibilities to his constituents and to the nation, particularly in the case of those who represent distant constituencies.

My purpose in writing to you, now more than 17 months ago, was with the thought that my observations would be of benefit to the special committee on procedure and organization which you planned to establish. On March 16, 1964 you replied, stating your own interest in my comments about Australia and New Zealand and informing me that you were referring a summary of my comments to the committee for their consideration.

Since that date I have not made any statements to the public or to the press, with the exception of last Thursday morning when Mr. Richard Jackson of the *Ottawa Journal* questioned me on how my comments to you regarding the Australian procedure would affect the Canadian situation. His comments were part of his "Hill Talk" column in Saturday's *Ottawa Journal*, and were basically correct. According to this, in lieu of the \$6,000 now allowed each member of parliament a system such as that used in Australia would provide for a member of parliament's expenses in a more equitable and direct manner. How the national news report came to be