

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 1, 1973

The House met at 2 p.m.

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I draw the attention of all hon. members to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of a very special parliamentary delegation. These distinguished legislators are members of the parliaments of Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom; but they are here today in a very special capacity. They are with us, and we welcome them, as members of the European parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The members of the House of Commons of Canada wish to extend a warm welcome to their distinguished colleagues. Meetings during this visit are naturally taking place in a spirit of friendliness and human understanding, and we are all happy about them. What will result from these meetings will certainly prove most welcome and useful.

● (1410)

[English]

Meetings and discussions thus conducted in a spirit of co-operation and friendship are bound to have constructive and beneficial results. On behalf of all hon. members, I welcome to this House the distinguished representatives of the Parliament of Europe.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PRIVILEGE

MR. NIELSEN—ALLEGED ALTERATION OF "HANSARD" BY SOLICITOR GENERAL CHANGING MEANING OF CERTAIN REMARKS—RULING MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) rose on a question of privilege to suggest that certain words spoken in the House the previous day by the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) were not accurately recorded in *Hansard* for October 30 at page 7351. The hon. member suggested that the words "and other" had been removed so as to alter the sense of the minister's statement. The minister in reply acknowledged that some changes had been made, and the Chair undertook to look into the matter.

A look at the so-called "blues", which are the transcripts of the reporter's original notes, indicates that the words "and certain other" were actually used by the minister. The rules or regulations governing the correction of the blues are not too clearly set down. The only reference the Chair could find was the report of the committee appointed by the House to supervise the actual report of the debates of the House, which report was presented on May 26, 1948, and concurred in by this House. Paragraph 4 of the recommendations of the committee reads as follows:

Your Committee recommends: That the pages of the daily edition be kept intact so that, after permissible corrections are made, the pages of the daily edition can be used for the bound edition as originally printed, and that changes suggested by members be confined strictly to correction of errors and essential minor alterations.

I think it has long been accepted practice that the editor of debates should have the responsibility to determine whether changes suggested by members are acceptable or not. In other words, the editor of debates should be allowed to exercise his judgment as to whether changes suggested by members are really corrections of errors or essential minor alterations. I am sure that hon. members will want to encourage the continuance of this practice.

At the same time, changes or alterations of the same nature which have not been suggested by a correction on the "blues" can be proposed to the House on motions. Here again this practice conforms with the provisions of Standing Orders. When changes are made to the record of the House either in accordance with provisions of Standing Order 32 at the request of members on motions, the correction appears in the revised edition of *Hansard*. In this particular instance I gather it would be the wish of the minister and hon. members who have given some thought to this matter that the revised edition conform with the minister's actual statement.

MR. SHARP—REFERENCE OF POSITION PAPER ON LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE TO COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I have given you notice. It has been brought to my attention that yesterday, in response to a question from the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard), I may have inadvertently misinformed the House regarding the reference of the document on the forthcoming Law of the Sea Conference which I propose to have tabled on the government's behalf tomorrow. It has been the government's intention all along to recommend to the House, through an appropriate resolution, that the paper in question be referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, and not the Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, as suggested to me in the question put by