

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 24, 1966

The house met at 11 a.m.

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. GRÉGOIRE—STATEMENT MADE IN HOUSE
ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN ALTERED

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning the right of members to receive in *Hansard* as faithful as possible a report of the debates taking place in this house.

While speaking on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) stated that, under his government, no death sentence had been commuted without a recommendation for mercy from the court.

Mr. Speaker, I was present when the Leader of the Opposition made his speech and I distinctly heard him make that statement. Other members, with whom I have checked since, also heard him. In addition, in its January 21 issue the *Globe and Mail* published the statement we heard as having been made by the Leader of the Opposition.

On the other hand, in his speech, the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) replied rather formally to that statement, as reported on page 70, right-hand column, of the French version of *Hansard*.

Now, upon reading the speech of the Leader of the Opposition on the question of capital punishment, on pages 52 and 53 of *Hansard*, there is no trace of the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, as a result of which the Prime Minister's reply no longer makes sense.

Under the circumstances, I feel it would be advisable to prevent any such errors of transcription in the future, more especially as the Leader of the Opposition had protested indignantly in the past against such incorrect reports, particularly in a speech made by the present Minister of Forestry (Mr. Sauv ), as well as in another made by the former minister of finance, now the member for Davenport (Mr. Gordon).

Hence, Mr. Speaker, I should like to move, seconded by the hon. member for Compton-Frontenac (Mr. Latulippe):

That the matter of irregularities or mistakes in transcription in the official report of the speech

made by the leader of the official opposition on January 20, 1966 in the House of Commons, be referred to the committee on privileges and elections.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would call the attention of the hon. member for Lapointe to paragraph 5, citation 104 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, 4th Edition, under which the Speaker must be satisfied that there is a prima facie case of privilege.

Obviously, an important question was raised by the hon. member. On the other hand, there may be an easy or plausible explanation for what the hon. member for Lapointe has mentioned. I would suggest that for the time being, we let the motion stand, until the Speaker can study the official report and render his decision, unless the hon. Leader of the Opposition cares to comment immediately, which would make it easier for the Speaker—

• (11:10 a.m.)

[English]

Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to comment at this time on the motion which has been proposed? The motion is not before the house, but it will be taken into consideration by the Chair. However, perhaps the right hon. gentleman might care to comment briefly.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, does your ruling mean that I cannot answer at this time? If so, that is perfectly all right with me. I would simply point out that the English edition at page 52 entirely covers the situation as it took place and that I in no way made any change or any alteration whatsoever. I would also say to the hon. member for Lapointe that with his usual lack of courtesy he did not let me know that this was coming up.

Mr. Speaker: In view of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition I suggest that there is no question of privilege. Hon. members will, I am sure, be satisfied with the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition. There may be a clerical error, but nothing more than that. I therefore declare there is no question of privilege.