

Privilege—Mr. Tucker

General, will proceed to the Senate chamber on Wednesday, May 14, at 5.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving the royal assent to certain bills.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

F. L. C. Pereira,

Assistant Secretary to the Governor General.

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO EDITORIAL IN TORONTO "GLOBE AND MAIL" OF MAY 14

Mr. W. A. TUCKER (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of privilege. My attention has been drawn to a leading editorial appearing in the May 14 issue of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, in which charges of dishonesty are made in the disposition of farm properties in British Columbia formerly occupied by persons of the Japanese race. I wish unequivocally to deny the charges which appear in this editorial.

Valuations made of these former Japanese lands were based on conditions which existed immediately prior to the outbreak of the war. The appraisals were made in the early summer months of 1942 when the war was at its blackest for the allied cause. No one knew at that time how long the war would last, but that these lands had any value for the reestablishment of Canadian veterans of world war II is attributable to the fact that Canada and her allies won the war, a fact which the *Globe and Mail* seems to ignore so far as Japanese nationals are concerned.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member not to read from the editorial but just to state briefly his question of privilege.

Mr. TUCKER: I am not reading any part of the newspaper at all. I am referring to this editorial which appeared in the *Globe and Mail*.

Mr. FRASER: This matter is before a committee, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. TUCKER: This is a question of privilege. An attack was made on the honesty of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the other ministers, and surely I am entitled, on a question of privilege, to draw attention to it.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. MACKENZIE: Hon. members opposite do not like it.

Mr. CASSELMAN: Somebody else does not like it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members know that the Speaker is responsible for seeing that the members abide by the rules. I would ask

[Mr. Speaker.]

hon. members to allow the Speaker to do that. I suggest to the hon. member that according to the rules of the house a member speaking to a question of privilege should be as brief as possible. I would ask the hon. member to state his question of privilege and give his explanation as briefly as possible.

Mr. TUCKER: I intend to be as brief as I possibly can, Mr. Speaker, and at the same time make my meaning plain. I will say this. I have been assured by the director under the Veterans' Land Act that all former Japanese lands acquired by him and sold to veterans have been sold at sufficient only to cover their actual cost to him. No profit whatever has been made by the Veterans' Land Act administration on the transactions. There are no grounds for the suggestion in the editorial that the lands were resold to the veterans by the Veterans' Land Act administration at "vastly increased amounts". No evidence was submitted to the public accounts committee to this effect, and I protest against such a baseless accusation being made. The facts surrounding the purchase of these lands from the official custodian and their resale to veterans are readily available to the public accounts committee.

Mr. FLEMING: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The matters to which the hon. member is referring are matters which at present are being reviewed by the standing committee on public accounts.

Mr. MACKENZIE: That is quite right.

Mr. FLEMING: The evidence has not been completed. The hon. gentleman is referring to something that will have to come before the committee in the way of evidence, probably next week. The statement the hon. member is making now is evidence which should be given before the committee.

Mr. TUCKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, may I proceed with my statement?

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I would ask hon. members to remain silent. They will realize that the hon. gentleman who has the floor is referring to an article which appeared in a newspaper and which apparently contained statements which are contrary to the facts. I believe it is in the interests of the public, and particularly in the interests of the veterans, to know exactly what the administration intends to do. So I believe it is in the best interests of all that the hon. gentleman be permitted to make his statement.