

Question of Privilege

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nugent: I am sure the house can derive amusement from a personal attack on myself. I realize I have taken up much time on this matter and perhaps I should not have bothered to correct this story about myself, but the suggestions contained therein do such a disservice to the country and to parliament that we cannot allow them to go unchallenged.

Certainly while many suggestions have been made that I have accused the minister of defence of not allowing full information to come before a committee, nothing I said could be considered as suggesting for one second that the Department of National Defence had ever discriminated against anyone on religious grounds, and nothing I said could be taken to mean that the government had at any time discriminated between English and French speaking Canadians.

I would think that since the question I raised involves such serious matters, including, as I alleged, the decline of our committee system and of responsible government, it is the worst kind of disservice to this country to misinterpret facts in an attempt to stir up trouble between religious groups, and introduce questions of this sort into the serious matters which are before the country. When people are made members of the press gallery they are given the privilege of sitting there so they may honestly and truthfully report to the nation those things which go on in the House of Commons.

There is further contained in this article the suggestion that the writer is acting on the advice of an informant. Again I suggest that since the writer is a member of the press gallery he has the responsibility to get his own information and report from his own knowledge. That is why he is allowed the privilege of sitting in the press gallery. I suggest that perhaps his informant should also be brought before this house. Certainly the editor of the newspaper who was guilty of allowing such a scurrilous article to be published, should appear. It is the worst kind of journalism, and the house may wish to consider seriously, whether it will allow any representative of an editor of that kind to attend sittings of this house.

I think, sir, that I am acting quite reasonably when I suggest to the house that my motion should be supported, and my motion is simply this:

That Marcel Pepin be called before the bar of this house to be dealt with re the breach of [Mr. Nugent.]

privileges of this house, as charged this date, by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona, concerning the article of October 14, 1966 in *Le Droit* under his name.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member file the article with the Clerk of the House, and I shall ask him to read the article very slowly.

[Translation]

The Clerk:

Le Droit, Ottawa, Friday, October 14, 1966.
SOME ADMIRALS WANT TO PRESERVE THE ANGLO-PROTESTANT CHARACTER OF THE NAVY, by MARCEL PEPIN.

Certain retired admirals have vowed that the navy would remain what it has always been, that is, British and Protestant. The Conservative outburst of passion against Mr. Paul Hellyer, Minister of National Defence, is the work of two retired admirals who have not swallowed the appointment of General Jean-V. Allard as head of the integrated forces, with full authority over the navy.

That explanation was given to us by no other than an English speaking military man, well aware of the situation.

The two rebels are Rear Admiral William Landymore, dismissed by Mr. Hellyer for insubordination, and his predecessor, Admiral Brock.

The latter directed from the public gallery the attack of the Conservative member Terry Nugent against hon. Mr. Hellyer, Wednesday.

Not only did he make signs to the member, but he also sent him messages during the debate. Witnesses have stated that Admiral Brock, who has been retired for three years, made a negative sign when Mr. Hellyer called on Mr. Nugent to put his seat at stake by making a specific charge of improper conduct.

Our informant maintains that half a dozen superior navy officers have been plotting at the Chester Club in Halifax since the appointment of General Allard.

The Chester Club, a classical WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) style institution, groups retired admirals or other officers of the navy whose mission it is to keep the navy British in character.

The appointment of General Allard and the replacement of Rear-Admiral Landymore by Rear-Admiral O'Brien, an Irish Catholic, has angered the defenders of the bastion.

The counter-revolution finally reached the House of Commons. Messrs. Landymore and Brock have been haunting the corridors of parliament for the last two days, and they spend their evenings with Conservative members of parliament, engaged in perfecting a strategy to make the government retreat.

Even if it is sometimes painful to change at a single stroke the spirit of a body as closed as the Royal Canadian Navy, the Department of National Defence is quite determined to win the battle.

Heretofore, no French Canadian could make his way in the navy, but nobody ever decreed that the naval defence of this country was the exclusive privilege of Anglo-Saxons, explained our informant.

"It is not by voting resolutions recognizing the equality between the two groups that Canada will come out of the current crisis uninjured, but by crushing reactionary forces in facts. We in the Defence Department are ready to do our part", concluded our informant.