

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 9, 1964

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. BALCER—REQUEST FOR CLOSURE TO END FLAG DEBATE

[Translation]

Hon. Léon Balcer (Three Rivers): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. For weeks, and even months, the House of Commons has been witnessing an unparalleled debate which is completely paralysing the business of this house and transforming it into a debating society where it is impossible to reach any decision whatsoever. Freedom of speech must be respected, but we should not act in such a way that this house be deprived of its main duty, which consists in making decisions.

That is why I deem that in this discussion on the flag the whole gamut of opinions has been heard, and should we extend it any further we would but prejudice the rights of parliament and the higher interests of our country.

Therefore, I believe that it is my duty to rise on a question of privilege and invite the Prime Minister, or one of his ministers, to give notice that he will make use of standing order 33 to have this question settled without further delay by applying the rule of closure.

[Text]

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): On the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was not speaking with the authority of this party.

MR. DEACHMAN—REMARK IN DEBATE BY MEMBER FOR BOW RIVER

Mr. Grant Deachman (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege. As reported in *Hansard* for Tuesday, December 8, at page 10956 the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Woolliams) said these words:

Well, Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect to you, if we were to move motions every time we wished to criticize the actions of hon. members opposite we would have nothing but motions in the house.

Then he went on to make the following specific statement with respect to myself:

But I would say in this matter that his own secretary—

That is, my secretary:

—was typing that very article days before it was published.

This refers to the article over my by-line in the *Citizen* of October 29. This is false; there is not a shred of evidence for it. I am quite sure that my secretary, if she had to, would give affidavits to that effect.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deachman: Sir, I ask that this statement be retracted. It is a false statement and I cannot let it stand on the record. It imputes things to me that I do not want remaining on the record, and it is completely false, without a shred of evidence. I ask that the hon. gentleman in all honesty retract the statement, which he cannot substantiate in this house.

Some hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say in answer to a phony question of privilege is that there has been another leak.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Deachman: Mr. Speaker. I request a retraction and I appeal to you for a retraction of this statement, which is not a fact but an outright falsehood.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: You had better lay a charge.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to call to the attention of hon. members in the house citation 145 of Beauchesne's fourth edition, which says:

It has been formally ruled by Speakers in the Canadian Commons that a statement by an honourable member respecting himself and peculiarly within his own knowledge must be accepted, but it is not unparliamentary to temperately criticize statements made by a member as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. A statement made by a member in his place, is considered as made upon honour and cannot be questioned in the house or out of it.