

*Privilege—Mr. Diefenbaker*

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would not want to deprive the House, nor myself, of the privilege of hearing from the right hon. gentleman, but I might make his remarks simpler if I say this. I am, of course, prepared to cede to him right away, but it might make some of his remarks shorter and simpler if I concede at the outset that I did make one mistake of fact. On the question of fish, there is no doubt that the right hon. gentleman was right and I was wrong, but that is as far as I am prepared to go. I do regret that I misled the House in regard to that erroneous statement, and I withdraw it without equivocation. As for the rest, I will gladly cede the floor to the right hon. member.

**Mr. Speaker:** That clears up the question of the stocking of Harrington Lake, I presume, so far as it pertains to a potential question of privilege. However, it seems to me to leave in the balance a number of other questions that were raised by the right hon. member for Prince Albert. I wonder whether the right hon. member for Prince Albert would want to continue and to conclude his remarks now and put whatever motion he has in mind, following which I propose to recognize the right hon. Prime Minister either in reply to those remarks, or alternatively—or perhaps in addition—allow him to put whatever question of privilege the right hon. Prime Minister wishes to put before the House.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, it is never too late to admit that one was wrong. I accept wholeheartedly the withdrawal of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the suggestion concerning fish.

**Mr. Nowlan:** He was fishing.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I should like to refer, however, to words that he used in the House concerning the fish. As recorded at page 6010 of *Hansard*, the Prime Minister said:

The right hon. gentleman for Prince Albert liked fishing and had Harrington Lake stocked at public expense with fish for his enjoyment.

Then he went on to say:

That was a shameful incident.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Read the interjection there.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** In the dictionary "shameful" means, in effect, disgraceful; subject to shame on the part of the person who committed the wrong; unworthy of consideration in any organization that has regard to truth and honour.

In face of that, I should have liked to hear a withdrawal of the word "shameful", which after all is the essence. Webster's dictionary makes its meaning clear: "conduct that brings to shame; disgraceful, scandalous conduct; injurious conduct that dishonours and offends decency; ignominious conduct". This was the word used by the Prime Minister to describe what he now admits had no basis in fact, and which certainly could not have justified use of that expression.

**Some hon. Members:** Shameful!

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I go on from there, Mr. Speaker. Loose statements are sometimes made in this House in the

[Mr. Hees.]

course of debate and under provocation. Spontaneity ameliorates, if not excuses, a retort that is not fact if it is provoked in debate. But such was not the case with the speech delivered by the Prime Minister on the twenty-second day of this month: it was planned, programmed and premeditated. I am told that he read from a script which he had entirely before him.

He stated during the course of his speech that he has a staff that is honourable, responsible and objective. I know many of the members of that staff and I entirely concur with the Prime Minister's view. It is of interest that since the speech of the Prime Minister the press got in touch with the high officials of his office, or his two offices, and everyone with one accord has said, "I had nothing to do with it; it was somebody else". When the Prime Minister is replying, I wonder whether he would advise who was the inspiration for the various statements that he made which apparently were designed to be a smokescreen.

Certain arrangements had been made between the opposition and the government. Under normal circumstances, on that afternoon the opposition would have led off but arrangements were made whereby, because the Prime Minister was going to leave, he should speak first.

**Some hon. Members:** That is not so.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** If some of the interrupters over there continue, Mr. Speaker, I will have to tell them what the Prime Minister thinks of them. He said of many of the Liberal members that they were bums and nobodies.

● (1510)

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An hon. Member:** He was right.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I would not want those hon. gentlemen opposite to prove he was right in that regard. I am informed that the arrangement was made and there was no declaration that the Prime Minister should be restricted to 15 minutes. That is true because he had longer than that; but do not let anybody tell me that what he did was not done with the intent to deprive members of the opposition of the opportunity of questioning him—speaking for an hour and a half, on and on he went.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I do not like to interrupt the right hon. gentleman but, with respect, I would suggest his question of privilege pertains to the Prime Minister's remarks about him specifically and not so much about the Prime Minister's use of time, and I think the hon. member should confine himself to the earlier question.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** When the Prime Minister referred to a member of the opposition as fraudulent, apparently the person who occupied your position did not think that was unparliamentary. The Prime Minister made that statement with that disregard he has shown for parliament all through the years. I had expected that we were past the days when those in the opposition should be spoken of in that way. I had thought that we were past the days when the Prime Minister of Canada would speak to the Leader