

Hansard—Altering of Report

Mr. Hansell: I am sorry. I thought it was a motion to refer this to the committee on debates. I am sorry if I misunderstood it. I do not think a motion is required at all. I think enough has been said to punish the minister. It is not the first time he has been punished in his long career.

Mr. Coldwell: It will not be the last.

Mr. Hansell: He says he is quite willing to rise and apologize. Let us not allow him or anyone else to think they can do these things and cover them all up with a little apology. That is not good enough. I do say, however, that there has been enough said. The minister recognizes the seriousness of the matter, and I trust that things of this kind will not happen again. The strange thing to me—though it is not strange after you have been in politics for a few years—is that, when anything becomes a political issue, my! my! how the sparks can fly!—and that is what that is. The minister knows it. Those gathered around him know it; and that is the reason for the whole fiasco today. As far as this group is concerned, we could just drop the matter now and let it stay where it is and let the minister realize that we are very critical of his action and that he himself will have to take the blame.

Mr. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the jeers which greeted the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Hansell) when he suggested that there had been an attempt to interfere with the freedom of the press in this matter. If I understood the Minister of Agriculture correctly, he told us that on Friday evening he had tried in certain quarters to prevent certain material from being published. That was my understanding of what he said. When the Minister of Agriculture, with all his years of experience and with all his influence, seeks to have something kept out of the press, if that is not interfering with the freedom of the press, I do not know what is.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, there is just one point in connection with this matter that I should like to ask Your Honour to consider. Before I do so, however, may I indicate my full support of Your Honour's suggestion that no member or minister should approach yourself or the Clerk in connection with matters of this kind. We have complete confidence in our reporters on the floor and in the editors of *Hansard* and we should not go beyond them with respect to a matter of this kind.

Mr. Harris: Will you withdraw your earlier remark?

Mr. Knowles: What is my hon. friend saying?

Mr. Harris: Will you withdraw the remark with respect to pressure, as your leader did?

Mr. Knowles: The Minister of Finance is asking that I withdraw the remark that I interjected at one point and in which I used the words "under pressure". Mr. Speaker, I do not feel that I should withdraw that remark. If any member of this house asked the editor of debates to make a change and the editor refused and if, as a result of that refusal, that member went to the Speaker in my view that is putting pressure on the Speaker.

The point I wish to raise, Mr. Speaker, relates to your suggestion that the words that were stricken from *Hansard* the other day be inserted at the proper point in the bound volume. First of all, of course, it will have to be made clear just where those words go. I believe Your Honour is the only one who has read the exact words so far and you said they would go after the figure "155,000". The figure "155,000" appears twice in the second last paragraph of column 2 on page 1056 of *Hansard*. I believe the words should be at line 12 of that paragraph.

The point I raise is this. Unless there is some notation put on page 1056 in the bound volume, a future student of *Hansard* will read page 1056 of *Hansard* of February 10, 1956, and this discussion of today with considerable confusion. Today's discussion will imply that these words are not there, but a future student of history will look back to page 1056 and will find that the words will be there. I am not proposing on the floor just how it should be done, but I am proposing that the editor of debates should be given permission to make a proper notation, if these words are put back in, to the effect that they were put back in as the result of today's discussion on the floor of the house.

Mr. Speaker: May I thank hon. members for the manner in which they have approached this difficult problem. May I say that apparently we are all in agreement as to how we want our *Hansard* to be protected. I think we are all in agreement that in authorizing the editor of debates to make the change which he made, I acted too summarily, too expeditiously and too lightly. I am extremely sorry to have acted in that light manner. I tried to explain the circumstances of the approach that was made to me. I want to state that if the minister had, as some hon. members contend, exerted any pressure, the alterations would certainly not have been made because it would have pointed out to