

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 19, 1959

The house met at 8 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. PICKERSGILL—REFERENCE TO REMARKS IN DEBATE BY MEMBER FOR KOOTENAY WEST

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. When I was absent from the house yesterday the hon. member for Kootenay West, as found at page 2031 of *Hansard*, purported to quote something I had said outside the house. I am quite sure the hon. gentleman did not mean to reproduce it incorrectly; I am sure he did not have the full text. It seems to me, since he was permitted to put it on *Hansard*, that as a member of the house I am entitled to put on *Hansard* the correct version of what I actually did say. With your permission, sir, I should like to do that. I have here the transcript made from the actual broadcast, and this is what I actually said:

In fact, Mr. Knowles and I had a conversation, which I don't think was private, about this very matter the night of the press gallery dinner. And I said to Mr. Knowles—I said—

"Will you tell me why it was that the I.W.A. chose to go right from British Columbia to Newfoundland, which had the highest wages and which was completely unionized already. All the loggers belonged to unions which had the check-off. Why did they go there, instead of going to New Brunswick or Nova Scotia or Quebec, where there is much less unionization and the wages are lower, if they were considering the real interests of the workers?" And Mr. Knowles said—"That's a very hard question to answer", and he didn't try to answer it.

I have a second point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The hon. gentleman suggested that my reference to this conversation was unethical. I am not asking him to withdraw that remark or anything of the sort; I am quite willing to have my ethics judged by the public and by this house without defending them in any way. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I did not express myself as well as I should have when I said it was a conversation which I did not think was private. The conversation, of course, was private in the sense that Mr. Knowles and I were not conducting a public debate. What I should have said and what I meant was that I did not think the conversation was confidential. I am quite sure that every hon.

member who has appeared on one of these programs will appreciate the fact that one does not have a great deal of time for reflection before making these statements.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps because at one time I was secretary to the cabinet I might have become a little confused about the difference between "private" and "confidential". I did not think that particular exchange between Mr. Knowles and me was confidential or meant to be or intended to be such. If Mr. Knowles thinks I have done him any injury, I apologize. But I still would like to hear the answer Mr. Knowles has to give to my question.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege may I say that I apologize to the hon. member for certain inaccuracies in my statement, having missed out a few commas and conjunctions; but the substance, in view of what he read, was essentially correct.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman did not mention the substance at all, if I might raise another question. The substance related to the other three eastern provinces.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member has sufficiently explained his question of privilege or his point of view.

MR. MCPHILLIPS—REFERENCE TO PRESENCE OF PRIME MINISTER IN HOUSE

Mr. A. D. McPhillips (Victoria, B.C.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege also. I think all hon. members of the house will agree with me when I say this. When we see the Prime Minister here this evening, notwithstanding the terrific stress and strain he has been under for so many days, I think it is a wonderful demonstration of devotion to democratic duty, and I suggest that the house show its appreciation in that regard.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Fourth and fifth reports of standing committee on miscellaneous private bills—Mr. McCleave.