

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Thursday, October 20, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### PRIVILEGE

MR. NUGENT—MOTION RESPECTING ARTICLE  
IN "LE DROIT"

**Mr. Terence Nugent (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege, which incidentally affects more hon. members than myself in the house. I am sure all hon. members will agree, when I have finished, that what I am about to refer to is a situation which should not be allowed to pass without being questioned.

My question of privilege arises out of an article in *Le Droit* of October 14 by Marcel Pepin. The article complained of imputes an improper motive to myself and is a gross distortion of the facts of this case as it occurred in the house. As such it is a breach of the privileges of parliament. I intend to move a motion, but first I want to satisfy Your Honour that though the article is dated Friday, October 14, this is my first reasonable opportunity to bring it forward because I was not aware of it and did not get a copy of it until it was handed to me this morning. This is the first chance I have had to bring it to the attention of the house.

The motion I intend to move at the end of my presentation is that this reporter be brought before the bar of parliament to be dealt with. I have and am willing to table a copy of the article complained of, and I rely on the presentation of a translation of that article, since my French is not adequate to deal with it. The translation having been done by my secretary, Mrs. Neault, it can be relied on, as she is very reliable.

The first point I should like to make is this. The article mentions, among other scurrilous attacks, that the question of privilege I raised last Wednesday in this house and the charge I made against the Minister of National Defence were directed from the public galleries by one Admiral Brock. I am sure it will come as a surprise to most members of the house that anybody can tell me how to handle an affair of mine in this house. I need say no more except to deny that there are friends of mine who can direct me, even while I am on my feet. I can assure everyone that is not so.

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There is, however, a more serious allegation against myself. The article says that Admiral Brock not only directed me from the gallery, but that witnesses have confirmed that Admiral Brock, who retired three years ago, made a negative sign when the Minister of National Defence challenged me to risk my seat by making a definite accusation of misconduct.

● (2:40 p.m.)

This is in such direct conflict with the facts so readily available that I need say no more. I am sure the house will remember that when I stood in my place I made the definite and formal charge, and also the way in which that was done. The house will remember that the defence minister did ask me whether my seat was at stake, and I answered that I took full responsibility for my conduct; and of course I am still willing to do so whatever that responsibility may be. If the reporter could possibly have mistaken that I cannot honestly understand why, because it was plain and clear. And if he was so obtuse, then certainly the chief electoral officer was not. I have here a copy of a letter from the chief electoral officer addressed to the electoral officer of my riding, Edmonton-Strathcona, dated October 13, that is last Thursday. He must have known my seat was at stake, because the last paragraph in that letter reads:

If, up to the dissolution of this parliament, the holding of a by-election becomes necessary in the present electoral district of Edmonton-Strathcona, you will, as returning officer for that electoral district, be required to conduct such by-election.

I do not bring that up simply to praise the alertness of the chief electoral officer, but I must say it was obvious to that important official what was at stake in the house in connection with the charge I made.

There are many serious allegations here, not only against myself but against other members of the house. A complete reading of the article would show that this writer has declared that the charges I made in the house in such a responsible manner are really the culmination of a plot by some Conservatives who want to see the navy remain British and Protestant, and who want to keep French Catholics out.