

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 10, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS

#### RESIGNATION OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

**Mr. Speaker:** I should like to bring to the attention of hon. members a communication I have received from the Chief Electoral Officer:

Ottawa, May 4, 1966.

The Honourable The Speaker of the  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Sir:—

In my report dated January 19, 1966, made to you, pursuant to subsection (3) of section 58 of the Canada Elections Act, I requested to be relieved of the duties of Chief Electoral Officer for the reasons that I gave in that report. For the same reasons, I now find it necessary to resign my office of Chief Electoral Officer.

In order to enable the new Chief Electoral Officer to commence the preparations resulting from the redistribution of electoral districts, which will be required to be made before the next general election, I respectfully suggest that the effective date of my resignation should not be later than the date of publication of the proclamation declaring to be in force the representation order referred to in section 22 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

After that date I propose to carry out the assignment that I am given by section 9 of the Representation Commissioner Act to study and report on methods of registration of electors and absentee voting, and to continue to discharge the other duties assigned by the two Acts in question.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient servant,

N. Castonguay,  
Chief Electoral Officer.

● (2:40 p.m.)

[Translation]

### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. LAFLAMME—C.B.C. NEWS BROADCAST RESPECTING LIBERAL CAUCUS

**Mr. Ovide Laflamme (Québec-Monimoney):** Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege.

On the C.B.C. newscast, Thursday, May 5, at 6.30 and at 11 p.m., commentator Jean-Marc Poliquin in his usual style commented on alleged leaks from the Quebec Liberal

23033—312

caucus concerning the current provincial elections and on the Liberal party prospects in some areas of the province.

To such garbled, imaginary and unfounded comments both as to wording and overall meaning, the sensation-seeking commentator attached my name and that of several colleagues of mine, to give his news the tone of an official newscast on the national network and thus insidiously create the impression that I and some of my colleagues were opposed to the premier of Quebec.

This unfounded, humiliating and prejudicial news item rouses indignation and contempt.

My question of privilege is a personal and collective one for the following reasons:

First, a political party caucus is a strictly private and confidential affair; any infringement of secrecy reflects upon every member of this house.

**An hon. Member:** You have not been here long.

**Mr. Heward Graffey (Brome-Missisquoi):** Because it is not controlled at the federal level as it is at the provincial level.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Second the national radio or television network and the press do not have the right to allow rumours and hearsay to be commented upon without giving in detail their sources of information.

Third, it is cowardly and unworthy of a public service to broadcast such trash and attribute statements to any members of this house without checking whether they are authentic.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member has indicated in his introduction the basis for his question of privilege, but without hearing any more I must advise him that none exists.

I would suggest that he consult citation 108 of Beauchesne's fourth edition which states:

Libels on members have also been constantly punished: But to constitute a breach of privilege, they must concern the character or conduct of members in that capacity, and the libel must be based on matters arising in the actual transaction of the business of the house.