

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 19, 1969

The House met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. DIEFENBAKER, MR. STANFIELD—CLARIFICATION OF QUESTIONS TO PRIME MINISTER

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Yesterday I put some questions to the Prime Minister, and one word that makes all the difference in the world to the statement I made has been omitted on page 931 of *Hansard*. In the U.S.S.R. Mao is known as "the great tiger". Yesterday I said, referring to Professor Lin, that the last time he visited Communist China "he reported on the great tiger to the Prime Minister." The words in *Hansard* carry a meaning that was never intended. I was referring to the last time he went there to visit the great tiger. I want to make that clear.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to point out that in asking the question yesterday the right hon. member conveyed to the House false information. Because Your Honour ruled the question out of order I was not able to correct this information. This sort of thing happens all the time, of course.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: We get it from the Prime Minister every day.

Mr. Trudeau: When members of the opposition ask loaded questions and convey false information, Your Honour rules them out of order. Again, this is a perfect example of the right hon. member having stated a falsehood in his question and I was not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I now rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The right hon. gentleman had risen on a question of privilege and the Prime Minister rose on a point of order. I hope we are not going to get involved too

much in this sort of thing, but the right hon. gentleman is now seeking the floor on a question of privilege.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to enter into an argument with the Prime Minister as to the making of false statements. We have had that experience with him, and regularly. I was simply pointing out that Mr. Lin was a close friend of the Prime Minister and had reported to him the last time on his visit to Communist China.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. At some point I must intervene to suggest to hon. members that I do not believe there is a question of privilege or a point of order here. We are having a discussion regarding an interpretation of what was and what was not said. This type of discussion should really not give rise to questions of privilege. I suggest to hon. members that perhaps not much will be gained by pursuing the matter further.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I must rise on a question of privilege. The right hon. member has just stated two new falsehoods. First of all, he said that I was a friend of Professor Lin.

An hon. Member: We don't want excuses.

Mr. Trudeau: You are not interested in the truth? Then I will tell it to somebody else. The right hon. member said that I was a friend of Professor Lin, a person I have never met and whom I do not know. Second, the right hon. member stated that he had reported to me. That is another falsehood. I have never met him nor read any of his papers. Therefore this is falsehood compounded on the part of the right hon. member.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, that statement—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the right hon. gentleman to my left in a moment; he is rising on another question of privilege. I certainly do not think we are going to achieve very much by a succession of alleged questions of privilege. In my view they are not questions of privilege at all. The right hon. gentleman is seeking to rise on