

*Point of Order—Mr. W. Baker*

you will know that you have our support and our sympathy in what you have been through today and that you will be able to contain the Prime Minister for the days left while this session lasts.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I can allow that sanctimonious utterance to be left uncontested.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacEachen:** Even if we are, as the hon. gentleman believes, close to the end of this parliament, I experienced the same difficulty today with a very long series of questions from the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), and when I attempted to answer them in detail and in accordance with his request, there were objections made by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

I believe it is unfair for the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) to complain about the conduct of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) when we all witnessed the difficulties under which he was working today. I believe, if the television cameras were able to focus on the whole House as it operated during the time the Prime Minister was being interrogated, the public would understand how hypocritical are the comments of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough to have the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) lose his temper and leave. It is almost as bad for the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) to lose his temper synthetically, and stay. I think all of us know—and most of all you, Mr. Speaker—that there were answers which were rather long, and all of us have to presume that they were rather long because certain members were preaching for a call and, when people are preaching for a call, sermons tend to be rather long, as we found out.

MR. BAKER (GRENVILLE-CARLETON)—THE STOPFORTH CASE—  
SUGGESTION MINISTER WITHDRAW ALLEGATION

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, while we are dealing with House business, I think there is another very important matter with which we should deal. When the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) left the House, he indicated, or at least implied, that he was going to the Governor General. While parliament is here it is important that this matter be brought forward, and I am bringing it forward. I refer to an action brought in the Supreme Court of Ontario by a public servant, Mr. Stopforth, against the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer). This action led to a judgment. The monetary amount is unimportant to what I have to say. However, the judgment of Mr. Justice Lief is quite important with respect to the business of this House.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

In rejecting the claim of the Minister of Supply and Services that Mr. Stopforth, a public servant, had misinformed the minister and was grossly negligent, Mr. Justice Lief said this:

The evidence discloses no act or omission on the part of the plaintiff—

That is, Mr. Stopforth.

—which could reasonably be characterized as gross negligence.

That is a judgment outside this House by a Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario which exonerates Mr. Stopforth from the negligence which was alleged against him by the Minister of Supply and Services, outside the House of Commons for the purpose of the action, but the statements outside the House of Commons were a repetition of a statement made inside the House of Commons on June 1, 1976, as reported at page 14031 of *Hansard*.

I raise this matter here today because for his own reasons, which I do not question, the Minister of Supply and Services has decided to leave public life. That may be soon because of what the Prime Minister has indicated, and if that is the case, unless those words with respect to a public servant which were said on June 1, 1976, are repudiated, they will stand forever on the record of the House of Commons.

I raise this matter as a point of order at the end of this session to suggest that it would be appropriate in the circumstances that the words now found to be untrue with respect to Mr. Stopforth outside the House be cleared from the record inside the House of Commons before the Minister of Supply and Services leaves public life. It is quite safe for the minister to do this.

Some may argue that the matter could be under appeal and so forth. It is quite safe from the point of view of the case which the minister may have on appeal—I do not know anything about that, nor do you, sir—for the minister to make that statement in the House of Commons because that statement made here would be privileged. However, aside from all those things, I respectfully suggest to the minister that it would be decent and appropriate of him to withdraw that allegation made in the House of Commons against Mr. Stopforth, privileged as it is, that same allegation having been found to be false outside the House of Commons in a court of law.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have some grave reservations—no matter how meritorious or important the matter by be—as to whether the matter in any way effects the order of the House. The matter is a matter before the courts. Disorder in the House might be a matter which we could take into consideration. However, I have great difficulty finding this matter as it now stands to be a procedural matter which in any way would involve a decision of the Chair.

MR. DIEFENBAKER—REPLIES BY PRIME MINISTER DURING  
QUESTION PERIOD

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, I was deeply distressed today to see the conduct of the