

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, July 7, 1960

The house met at 11 a.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. REGIER—ARTICLE IN OTTAWA "CITIZEN"
RESPECTING DIVORCE PROCEDURE

Mr. Erhart Regier (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. My question of privilege is this. I have in my hand a copy of yesterday's *Ottawa Citizen*, and I note therein an article entitled "Divorce Blockade—Parliament May Sit On", written by Jack Best.

My first complaint is that what was supposed to be a meeting held in camera of the committee on procedure has apparently, in part at least, now been reported to the press. This being the case, I must now seek to make a correction of the false information that is contained in the article. As you will recall, I did tell the committee that it was my opinion that if among other things the committee would undertake to look into the method of handling divorce by this parliament and explore possible alternative methods, it would go a long way toward meeting our objections. Never at any time was I authorized, nor did I agree, to call off whatever blockade of divorce procedure may happen to exist.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Oh, it is a blockade, is it?

Mr. R. J. McCleave (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I also rise on a question of privilege with reference to the same report. The report was an accurate quotation of my words, and an accurate reflection of what happened at that particular meeting.

PUBLIC SERVICE

INQUIRY AS TO APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION
OF INVESTIGATION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he thinks he will be in a position to announce to the house before the end of the session the appointment of what has been called a Hoover-type commission to investigate the organization of the civil service.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that subject has been thoroughly canvassed with a view to securing,

as I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would expect, the most outstanding men and women in this country; because after all this will be a commission which will have tremendous responsibilities and can, if it is able to secure and mobilize the most outstanding personnel, make a valuable contribution in its field of responsibility which would be beneficial to Canadians for many years to come.

I am sure that when the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the cabinet he sometimes wanted very much to secure as members of these bodies people who were not always available; not because they would in any way decline the assumption of their duties as citizens, but because circumstances sometimes denied the participation which otherwise they would have given.

I am informed that the question contained these words "to investigate the civil service". Of course I am not assuming that that is going to be the purpose of the Hoover-type commission. When the terms of reference are made available they will make perfectly clear the field and the general ambit of the investigation to be made.

Mr. Pearson: I did not use the words "investigate the civil service"; I used the words "investigate the organization of the civil service", which is a little different.

AGRICULTURE

DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS—INQUIRY AS TO
ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Prime Minister arising out of the great and continuing interest in the government's consideration of the matter of income deficiencies of western farmers. Can the Prime Minister say whether a firm announcement of government policy will be made before the conclusion of this session so that in the event of an affirmative decision parliament will be able to vote the required moneys for immediate payment to producers?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think an announcement as to the course to be followed in this connection can be expected before the end of the session. I can say this. Having regard to the acceleration of business in recent days, that should not be too far removed.