

*Marine—Alleged Maladministration*

with any of the others. I hope when we go into committee he will do so.

But before going further into the matter I wish to apologize for the error I made as it is recorded at page 2092 of Hansard. I used this language: "I have been writing to the minister since October." I should have said, "I have been writing to the minister's department since October." The minister made the most of that statement.

Mr. DURANLEAU: Did you not receive a reply to each letter you sent? Did you not have a reply to all your letters?

Mr. NEILL: No, I did not receive a reply from the minister at all.

Mr. DURANLEAU: But from the department?

Mr. NEILL: Yes.

Mr. DURANLEAU: Your letters were answered by Mr. Hawken?

Mr. NEILL: Yes.

Mr. DURANLEAU: And you received a reply from him in connection with each letter, furnishing all details asked for?

Mr. NEILL: I received a reply to every letter I addressed to an officer of the department. I should have said I had been writing to the minister's department, not the minister. The minister made a great point of that, and I thought used it to cover up some other points he was not very sure about. I have no fault to find with that; he who liveth by the sword must expect occasionally to perish by it, and that was his opportunity. And so, with bowed head and averted countenance I apologize to the minister for the grievous error. But we all sin occasionally; to err is human, to forgive is divine. In mitigation of my grievous offence may I make these observations: I was interrupted four times, one after the other, during the course of my remarks—three times by the minister and once by another minister. Each interruption was strictly out of order, because my permission was not asked. Having been interrupted so much and being of a nervous disposition perhaps I became a little rattled on the fourth occasion. I replied rather hurriedly and left out a word I should have put in.

Then, again, I would plead in due humility, Mr. Speaker, another circumstance in mitigation of my offence. It is this: As we all know, we have the privilege of revising our speeches, the privilege of checking over the

[Mr. Neill.]

typewritten record before it is printed. We are allowed to put in a word or two, if by so doing we amplify or make the meaning clearer. As we all do, I checked over my remarks and observed the error I had made. I saw the possibility of attack in consequence of the error, and it would have been a very simple process and no one would have objected if I had inserted the word necessary to make my meaning correct. But I did not do that. I think that should be remembered in my favour when condemnation is being dealt out.

Mr. CASGRAIN: Forgiven.

Mr. NEILL: I shall not forget it, not while water runs and grass grows. Now, sir, having made this amende honorable, as the poet says, having bowed my haughty head and tamed my heart of fire, and having made this humble apology for the grievous error which, after all, was a very trivial slip of the tongue, I should like to ask the minister something: Has he any explanation to make or has he any apology to offer either to me or to the house the rules of which have been so grossly trampled in this connection. On the occasion to which I refer the minister spoke, as usual, from his seat. He spoke in clear tones, and could easily be heard. The reporter present was not more than ten feet from the minister. The reporter put his record on file in the usual way. But a whole paragraph of what appeared on the record is missing from the printed record of Hansard. Not a word or two but a whole sentence is missing—thirty-one words—thirty-one words. It was not a duplication which might reasonably have been cut out—nothing of that kind, but was a new statement containing a rather damaging admission and one which, to some extent, went to substantiate some of the charges I had made. I want to ask this question: At whose instigation and at whose request or for whose benefit was that deletion made or why did that deletion take place? Perhaps the minister will tell us when he rises to his feet. I left out one word; I did not put it in. The minister said perhaps more than he intended—thirty-one words more—and they were cut out.

Mr. BENNETT: Since the question of order is raised, may I raise one? When the house was moved into supply on the last occasion the hon. member spoke concerning this subject, and on that occasion he made statements such as he is making now.

Mr. NEILL: No.