

Hansard reports the item carried, that is item 21, which we were dealing with at that time, and we went on afterwards to items in the general estimates. That was civil government. In the general estimates item 256 is divided into three parts. We were dealing with the three items separately, and when six o'clock was reached the hon. member who has raised the question of privilege was on his feet. I remember quite distinctly that when the chairman left the chair at six o'clock I felt sure the item had not been carried, that is 256 including all three items. We were discussing salaries and allowances, and mail services and so forth, mixing up the two. I crossed the house and said to the Postmaster General, "Your estimates will go through hurriedly after six o'clock, perhaps within half an hour." I was anxious myself to have the estimates go through, and with that in mind I crossed the floor to the Postmaster General, but he informed me that the items were all through, the chairman had said, "Carried." The Postmaster General was under the impression that his estimates had been carried.

Mr. SAUVE: Yes, exactly.

Mr. VENIOT: I then went to the chairman before he left the chamber and asked him whether these items were carried, and he said yes. The clerk assistant looked at the record and informed me that on the table record, the scroll, it was marked "Carried." I had my doubts whether it was carried. Then the matter came up afterwards in discussion with the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps) and I told the hon. member that it was marked "Carried" on the scroll, but the item carried is not the item in dispute at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no point in elaborating the question any further, but if the hon. member will turn to page 3871 of Hansard, he will find that the whole item is reported, and that the whole item was under discussion according to the record. In any event, the chairman of the committee called it carried, the clerk who was taking the record put it down as carried and it has been carried.

Mr. G. G. COOTE (Macleod): I think, Mr. Speaker, that in this case the liberties of the house are perhaps challenged, and I would ask Your Honour whether the chairman of the committee can declare an item carried while members are discussing that very item. Is that the position the house is being placed in by the happening of Friday afternoon?

The Speaker of the house is charged with looking after the liberties of the house and seeing that they are not infringed upon. I think the member who was acting as chairman of the committee simply made an error in calling the item carried. We do not wish to set up a precedent here that will enable a chairman at any time to declare an item carried and so prevent discussion.

Mr. BENNETT: I think, Mr. Speaker, that the only method by which a matter of this kind can be dealt with is by formal proceeding. As far as the records of this house are concerned they show that the item was carried. They show further that the report of the committee was adopted. That being so, formal proceedings would have to be taken to vary the records. Assuming there may have been some confusion at the moment, after hearing the hon. member for North Winnipeg I have just indicated to him that no prejudice could possibly follow for he would be afforded opportunity to discuss the item which he says was prematurely passed or recorded as passed when it should not have been. I think where no prejudice has been done there is no necessity to resort to any formal proceedings, but if anyone were prejudiced by the action that has been taken there are means that can be resorted to, although they are somewhat formal in their character, for the purpose of seeing that the prejudice is removed from any hon. member of the house. I bear out what the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Veniot) has stated; I was not in the house in the afternoon, but just as the house rose he informed me that the post office estimates would be disposed of the next day, because he was going to make just a brief review of the situation. As I see it from the records, that is what did transpire and the report of the committee was made. For that reason I do not think the rights of the house have been affected; no prejudice has been done, and the hon. member will be afforded an opportunity to discuss the item when the house is in committee on the bill founded on the resolutions.

#### COURTS OF ADMIRALTY

Hon. HUGH GUTHRIE (Minister of Justice) moved the second reading of bill No. 88, respecting courts of admiralty.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be well if I offered a word of explanation in regard to the object and scope of the proposed