

*Hansard—Altering of Report*

**Mr. Coldwell:** I would like to know why the Minister of Agriculture went both to the editor of *Hansard*, who as I understand it refused to make the changes that he urged upon him, and then went to the Speaker if it—

**Mr. Gardiner:** He did not refuse, he simply suggested that I go and discuss the matter with the Speaker, and I did.

**Mr. Coldwell:** All right; I will take that explanation from the Minister of Agriculture. But I do know that on one occasion when a colleague of mine simply inserted in *Hansard* the words "Mr. Speaker" indicating that I had risen to speak, the Minister of Agriculture not only objected to it but he pursued the former editor of *Hansard* with letters of criticism almost until he went to his grave.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Will you produce the letters?

**Mr. Coldwell:** I say to the right hon. gentleman that he obtained an alteration in *Hansard* which was not warranted. We have always believed that a member of parliament might go to the *Hansard* office and make editorial changes. What I mean is that he might change the phraseology without changing the meaning to improve the construction of a sentence. He might go to *Hansard* and change a figure that he had misquoted or, as I did the other day, when I quoted the name of a slave, in this House of Commons from memory, I quoted the wrong name and *Hansard* was good enough to accept my correction for the revised record of the debate.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Did the hon. gentleman say slave?

**Mr. Coldwell:** S-l-a-v-e. I said the name of a slave in this House of Commons. The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that you can put something in parentheses, and that is what I was doing. He is a master of the English language and he knows perfectly well what I was doing, but he thought it would be smart to pick me up.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I object; I really misunderstood.

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

**An hon. Member:** You are still all wet.

**Mr. Coldwell:** What I was going to say is that those changes have been permitted, but this is a different sort of change. This was a change in meaning. I have looked at all the precedents that I could find this morning. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) has quoted one of them, perhaps the most important. During the last 30 years members have risen in this house and drawn mistakes to the attention of the Speaker and the Speaker has

ordered that words might be expunged from the record. From the chair he has ordered it, not outside this chamber. I looked through the records this morning and I could not find a single instance where anything of this sort had happened before. I hope that it will not happen again. From what His Honour the Speaker has said I do not think it will happen again.

I want it to be abundantly clear that in rising and discussing this problem I am not placing blame on Mr. Speaker, although I think perhaps Mr. Speaker did not exercise at that moment good judgment. I am placing the blame where it squarely belongs, on the Minister of Agriculture. This was an attempt on the minister's part to cover up something which he felt he should not have revealed to the house.

**Mr. Gardiner:** My friend knows better than that; he should know better than that.

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. Gardiner:** It was nothing that I should not reveal to the house. I revealed it to the house today.

**Mr. Coldwell:** If the minister felt it was something he should have revealed to the house, why did he reveal it to the house today after having taken it out of *Hansard* on Friday. I will tell you why he revealed it to the house today. It was because public opinion will support the members of this house in demanding that the Minister of Agriculture shall not be allowed to falsify the records of parliament. He realized that and so today he came back to try to make, shall I put it, restitution.

**Mr. Gardiner:** I realized on Friday that I would have all the abuse I am getting now and I was quite prepared to take it rather than leave some charge on the head of someone else.

**Mr. Coldwell:** I am very glad to know that that was the case. But, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon you tried to relieve the minister and I submit that the origin of the whole trouble should be laid on the shoulders of the Minister of Agriculture and that is where I intend to let it remain.

**Mr. E. G. Hansell (MacLeod):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that perhaps in the end it will be discovered that this incident has been more or less highly inflated. However, that does not mean there is not some responsibility attached to someone somewhere, and that "someone somewhere" amounts to three people.