

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 22, 1976

The House met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REFERENCE IN "GLOBE AND MAIL" EDITORIAL TO MR.
SPEAKER—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking consent to rise under Standing Order 43. It is not usual for a minister to do this, but in view of the special circumstances that prevail as a result of an editorial which appeared in today's issue of the *Globe and Mail*, I thought it was essential that a response be made by the House—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: —to this unjustified, unwarranted and unacceptable attack upon yourself and your conduct as the presiding officer of the House. There is ample precedent to justify the statement that an attack of this kind upon your conduct and upon your person is an attack upon the House itself.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: I refer particularly to the concluding sentence of the editorial which reads as follows:

Let it be said of James Jerome that he is not a Speaker but a gambler who plays incredible odds for the popularity of his party.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. MacEachen: The earlier part of the editorial deals with a labour dispute, and it is not my intention to become involved in the facts or in any aspect of that dispute, but I do take grave exception on behalf of the House to this final statement which affects the privileges of the House in a very real way.

So I would like to have the consent of the House to move the following motion:

That the statement "Let it be said of James Jerome that he is not a Speaker but a gambler who plays incredible odds for the popularity of his party" contained in the editorial in the *Globe and Mail* on December 22, 1976, is a gross libel on Mr. Speaker, and that the publication of the article is a gross breach of the privileges of this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1410)

Mr. MacEachen: I should have included in my comments that the motion is seconded by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the consent asked for by the government House leader, it is granted without reservation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): With respect to the force and purport of the motion which he asks this House to accept, we accept the words, the spirit and the intent without reservation, and I am sure the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) will join in those sentiments as well.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my party I join in the sentiments which have been expressed. We give consent to the presenting of this motion. We regard it as a very serious matter, and we hope the House will now adopt this motion unanimously.

[Translation]

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my party, I wish to join the official opposition and give our consent to the House in that connection. I think we must protect the House against such an attack since Mr. Speaker represents the House. We must unanimously protest against such action.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Such a motion presented pursuant to Standing Order 43 can be presented only with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: This is an extraordinary situation and one which would never call for a comment from the Chair, but I