

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 25, 1963

The house met at 11 a.m.

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ENGLISH DEBATES BRANCH—TABLING OF REPORT OF SURVEY

Mr. Speaker: Following a recommendation made by the commissioners of internal economy at a meeting held yesterday, I beg leave to table copy of a report of a survey of the English debates reporting branch, House of Commons, by the management analysis division, advisory service branch of the civil service commission, dated January 1963.

PRIVILEGE

MR. LAMBERT—EDITORIAL IN TORONTO
"GLOBE AND MAIL"

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to raise a question of privilege affecting all hon. members of this house because I feel there is a rather unfair commentary on the proceedings of this house appearing in an editorial in this morning's *Globe and Mail*. Reference is there made to the debate which took place in this house very briefly last Friday consisting of a speech lasting some 15 minutes by the Prime Minister, and a debate lasting about an hour and a half to an hour and 40 minutes the day before yesterday, concerning the setting up of the committee to deal with the procedures of this house.

It has been suggested, Mr. Speaker, that this was a waste of time. May I say, sir, that I feel it would be quite improper to so suggest since the house limited itself to statements by leaders of the parties, and I myself spoke for a period of less than three minutes. Certain things were said during the course of that debate which could not be said in committee. They were matters for the house to consider during the course of that debate. Under the circumstances I feel that the inferences drawn and some suggestions contained in the editorial were quite unfair to this house as a whole.

MR. OLSON—ATTEMPT TO CALL MEETING OF
AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): I rise on a question of privilege that concerns all members of this house and which, I suggest,

28902-5—254

has become urgent in the last few days. Yesterday evening I addressed a letter to the chief of the committees and private legislation branch, and I wish to quote that letter:

Dear Sir:

I wish to request that a meeting of the standing committee on agriculture and colonization be called with all convenient speed for the purpose of selecting a chairman and other officers.

I further request that the committee be asked to consider and investigate the wide difference between the price received for feed grain by the producers in western Canada and the price paid by livestock feeders in eastern Canada.

Yours truly,

H. A. Olson.

I received a letter in reply, which I also wish to quote:

Dear Mr. Olson:

Your letter of October 24 requesting a meeting of the standing committee on agriculture and colonization has just been handed to me.

As I indicated to you over the telephone, I have no authority to call a meeting of any parliamentary committee. However, I am passing your request on to the chief government whip who, according to practice, advises me with respect to organization meetings.

Yours very truly,

Antonio Plouffe.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there is precedent for raising a question of privilege such as I have in mind. I do not intend to quote all the evidence which is contained in the official records of this house, but it is reported in *Hansard* for April 16, 1935, volume III at page 2768 that a member of the staff of this house wrongfully interfered with the rights of a member. The point I wish to make now is that a member of a standing committee which has been set up does in fact have the right to request a meeting of that standing committee, and the officers of this house are under obligation to call such a meeting.

Standing order 65(1)(f) provides for the composition of a standing committee of the house on agriculture and colonization, to consist of 60 members, 20 of whom shall constitute a quorum.

On Thursday, June 27, 1963 this house concurred in the composition of such a standing committee and resolved that the committee be empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters and things as might be referred to it by the house; and to report from