

Mr. Starr: They did not appear in the House of Commons and were ordered to be taken into custody. This appears in the *Journals* for May 10, 1873, at page 317. The historical explanation is that Sir John had remained at home for reasons of health of a liquid nature.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Starr: On May 12 Sir John received a medical certificate from Doctor Tupper which was read to the house in the form of an affidavit, as follows:

I, Charles Tupper, of the City of Ottawa, in the County of Carleton, Doctor of Medicine, do make oath and say: That having been called upon to give my professional opinion in reference to the state of health of Sir John A. Macdonald, a Member of the House of Commons, I stated my opinion that it was necessary for the preservation of his health, that he should for some days refrain from the discharge of his duties as such Member of the House—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Starr: I ask, Mr. Speaker, is it to be a requirement that members revert to this sort of practice? I submit that it is in the height of bad taste—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr:—it is completely futile and a waste of the time of this house for one member to point the finger at another for behaviour which is dictated for him by the unique nature of the constituency for which he sits. One wonders if the good electors of Lotbinière would not prefer to read of their member's concern for such matters as housing or the plight of eastern agriculture rather than his fatuous remarks and bitter personal attacks.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition does not think he has made his point. Perhaps I might be allowed to deal with the question of privilege. I can assure hon. members that I have had an opportunity to reflect on the matter raised by the hon. member for Lotbinière. He gave me written notice earlier today, and I am prepared to make a ruling now.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): As I have been directly involved in this matter perhaps I might say a brief word. I do not intend to engage in recriminations with my hon. friend across the way, except to say that what he said is false and baseless with respect to the absences mentioned by him in *Hansard*. I could point the finger at several members on

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the opposite side whose record for attendance is a good deal worse than mine.

Mr. Choquette: That is not true.

Mr. Nielsen: The hon. member says it is not true.

Mr. Choquette: It is not true.

Mr. Nielsen: He will not involve me in the name calling in which he is involved.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: I may say that I have been absent over the past few months, but I have also been attending in the house over the past few months. While I have been absent I have missed the hon. member for Lotbinière as deeply, I am sure, as he has missed me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: May I, as a substantive point to the one that has been raised, refer Your Honour to page 2755 of *Hansard* for yesterday. The translated heading under which the hon. member raised this question is as follows: "Inquiry as to the prolonged absence of the member for Yukon".

An hon. Member: Terrible.

Mr. Nielsen: In all fairness I think that heading should be deleted; at least it should have been couched in terms to show that it is a mere allegation by the hon. member for Lotbinière and not a *fait accompli*, as one might gather by what appears in *Hansard* of yesterday's date. That is all I have to say.

Mr. Speaker: I had asked the co-operation of hon. members to allow me to make a brief ruling on the point raised by the hon. member for Lotbinière.

Dealing with the last point of the hon. member for Yukon, I feel sympathy for his suggestion that perhaps the heading of that paragraph in *Hansard* was not quite appropriate. We might have referred to the question in terms of an allegation rather than in terms of a statement of fact. I can assure the hon. member that the official records of the house will be corrected accordingly.

Yesterday the hon. member for Lotbinière raised a point of order affecting the privileges of the hon. member for Yukon, and I suggested to him that these allegations could not be considered under the guise of a point of order. In accordance with the standing order he has now served the Chair with notice of