

*Inquiries of the Ministry***ADMIRALTY ACT**AMENDMENT TO PERMIT PAYMENTS TO JUDGE
AND REGISTRAR

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Justice) moved that the house go into committee at the next sitting to consider the following resolution, which has been recommended to the house by His Excellency:

That it is expedient to amend the Admiralty Act to permit the governor in council to authorize the payment of a salary not exceeding four hundred dollars per annum to a surrogate judge and not exceeding three hundred dollars per annum to a registrar.

Motion agreed to.

FINANCEAUSTERITY PROGRAM—REPORTED STATEMENT BY
MINISTER OF JUSTICE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister how he can reconcile the statement made yesterday by the Minister of Justice in Toronto that "Canadians should not expect an early end of the emergency austerity measures adopted on June 24" with the earlier announcement that the austerity program was only of a very temporary character.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the words in question; therefore there is no reconciliation involved.

[Later:]

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I think I should, on a question of privilege, make reference to the question asked earlier today by the Leader of the Opposition based on a remark attributed to me in a speech in Toronto yesterday. The expressions he used in his alleged reference, Mr. Speaker, do not bear any resemblance to the language that I used in this speech yesterday. In that speech I did use this sentence—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Would the minister indicate his point of privilege so that I can judge whether privilege is involved at this time.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It is because the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, purported to base a question to the Prime Minister on a statement attributed to me in a speech in Toronto yesterday.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): As reported in the *Globe and Mail*.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): As reported—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): In the *Globe and Mail*, your favourite newspaper.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The Leader of the Opposition did not specify what he was quoting from or where the report was contained. The point of privilege is that the report as he has given it to the house includes terms that I have not used. They do not bear any resemblance to what I said yesterday.

Mr. Chevrier: Another misquotation.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): My speech is a matter of record—

Mr. Pickersgill: On a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am rising on a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is one speaker at the moment. If the minister is making a correction to words attributed to him, it is my view that he can do so succinctly and simply, and to the point—and this is purely hypothetical—for instance by pointing out that words attributed to him were not said by him. We must then accept what the minister says. Beyond that I think we should not go, because we should not get ourselves into an interminable wrangle on fine points in this regard.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): Mr. Speaker, I respectfully rise on the point of order raised by Your Honour as to whether there was a question of privilege. This point should be settled before the minister is allowed to proceed.

It is a well known rule of this house that a question of privilege must be raised immediately the point arises and not after the minister has had an hour for reflection. I suggest that the same rule should be applied to the minister as I trust Your Honour intends to apply from now on to all hon. members. A question of privilege is either taken up immediately or not at all.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that in the circumstances the point is well taken. The minister has indicated the general nature of his position, and I think we will leave the point at that.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, in view of what the minister has said—

Mr. Speaker: I think I have indicated quite clearly what my ruling would be on this question. I heard the point of order raised by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillin-gate. The minister had indicated that he did not agree with the words attributed to him. I do not believe it would lead to any clarification,