

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 21, 1966

The house met at 11 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TABLING OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF INTERNAL ECONOMY COMMISSION

Mr. Speaker: May I be permitted to lay before the house an extract from the minutes of a meeting of the commissioners of internal economy, in English and in French, held on October 18, 1966, relating to salary revisions affecting a number of positions in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

STANDING ORDERS

Third report of standing committee on standing orders, in both French and English—Mr. Asselin (Richmond-Wolfe).

[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. WINCH—DAMAGE TO CENTRE BLOCK FROM BLASTING OPERATIONS

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): I desire to rise on a question of privilege, which Your Honour may consider a grievance. It is a matter which in my estimation is of concern to all members of the House of Commons, to members of the other place and, I would think, to all citizens of Canada. With your gracious permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a brief statement explaining why I rise.

We all love this House of Commons building. We would not want to see it destroyed or hurt. It so happens that of necessity certain construction work has to take place in the grounds. That work requires boring through rock, and the use of explosives is therefore demanded.

• (11:10 a.m.)

Yesterday afternoon, sir, while we were sitting in this House of Commons, there were a number of explosions during construction work. One was fantastically heavy, so heavy, sir, that it reverberated in this house. As one who knows something about construction, that concerned me very much. I have made a

check and, sir, damage is being done to our House of Commons because of the strength of the charges. Already plaster is being cracked in our building but, sir, more than plaster—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Winch:—because of the major charge that was set off yesterday. Sir, I am talking about the construction work outside, not the discussions in the house.

Because of what happened yesterday, followed by the minor explosions, the Peace Tower has sustained damage. This morning, sir, because of my concern with this matter I visited the Peace Tower and found that cracks had appeared in our most beautiful Memorial Chamber and material of a major nature had fallen. I, sir, have with me now, and I shall send through you to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McIlraith), what I picked up in our Memorial Chamber this morning.

I raise this question, sir, because I think it is of paramount importance. Through you to the Minister of Public Works I make an appeal, on behalf of our beautiful parliament building, that it be made clear, to the contractors that while we understand the necessity of explosions, we request that they reduce the major explosions to larger minor ones so as not to endanger our buildings and structures.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Winch: I know, sir, that on a matter of privilege or grievance I should move a motion, but I feel certain that after drawing it to your attention in this way, and through you to the attention of the Minister of Public Works, immediate action will be taken and therefore it will not be necessary that I move a motion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I do not know that this is a question of privilege, but I believe it would be the wish of hon. members if I were to treat the statement that has been made as a question and explain exactly what are the facts, because I think they are of interest to all members.