

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 4, 1963

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. PIGEON—CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS
RESPECTING CHARGE AGAINST HAL BANKS

[Translation]

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a point of privilege.

Mr. Martineau, a Montreal lawyer who has been appointed by the Canadian government to study the Norris report contradicted the Minister of Justice, who, with regard to Mr. Hal Banks, and in answer to a question asked by the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr), made the following statement on October 31, 1963, which may be seen on page 4215 of *Hansard*:

[Text]

A charge has been laid against Hal Banks in Montreal.

[Translation]

Mr. Martineau, as reported by all newspapers, including the *Montreal Star*, stated that no charge had yet been laid against the chairman of the S.I.U., whereas, last Thursday the Minister of Justice maintained that charges had been brought against him.

To my mind, the statement of the Minister of Justice was ill-considered and irresponsible.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the complaint of the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm was not a point of privilege because it does not affect the rights of hon. members. The hon. member tried to point out a contradiction between a statement made by a Montreal lawyer and the one I made last Thursday in the house.

Now, as I said last Thursday in the house, charges have been brought against the people concerned.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I am not satisfied with the answer given by the Minister of Justice.

[Text]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

STATEMENT AS TO GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR
REMAINDER OF SESSION

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that it

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would be helpful to the members of the house if I made a statement at this time on government plans for business during the remainder of this session, which it is hoped will come to an end before Christmas.

It is impossible, of course, to be definitive about business during the next two months, or indeed about the priority which should be attached to business, because things may develop during that time which will require a change in the order we have in mind now, and which indeed may require additional or new legislation to be brought in. But subject to that qualification I should like to make a statement in as great detail as possible about what the government has in mind in the matter of business for the remainder of the session.

The most urgent business is to complete the consideration of estimates. It would not be possible, in our view, to end the session without all essential work being completed. I know that in some respects it is housekeeping work, but it is housekeeping for which this house is responsible to the taxpayers of the country. In addition, the discussion of estimates also provides opportunities for statements of departmental policy. For example, it is our intention that in introducing the estimates of the Department of Agriculture the minister will announce improvements in policy which this government proposes to undertake for the benefit of farmers.

If I may now turn to legislation, the first priority is to complete the bill amending the Income Tax Act. Equally urgent is the bill concerning the surcharge on imports order. We also intend to proceed soon with the very important resolution on the amendment of the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act; and we hope, and I am sure all hon. members hope, that there will not be much delay in getting subsequent legislation on this matter through all its stages.

The next major measures which we hope to bring forward during this session will be, first, that dealing with the redistribution of constituencies in order that the people of Canada should in the sixties have a properly representative House of Commons based on the population distribution according to the last census. It is urgent that this legislation be completed at this session. Then we would propose to press on next with the amendment of the National Housing Act. This may be as far as we can realistically expect to go, before the recess, with our major legislative proposals; but if the house moves faster than perhaps we have any right to expect at the