

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 20, 1973

The House met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. DIEFENBAKER—ERROR IN HANSARD RESPECTING
NAME OF PRESIDENT OF UGANDA

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, at page 2344 of yesterday's *Hansard* I asked the following question:

Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister what purpose his personal envoy, Mr. Head, has in visiting various Commonwealth countries at this time?

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) gave me the explanation. The passage then reads:

MR. DIEFENBAKER: Mr. Speaker, what particular message was to be conveyed to General M'boto of undistinguished notoriety, the head of Uganda? What was the message to him?

The Prime Minister replied:

Mr. Speaker, President M'boto is no longer president of Uganda.

As members will recall, yesterday afternoon the House was in a very happy and rather vociferous mood. I like it that way. The result was that what was said was not recorded by the reporter because it was drowned out. The Prime Minister understood me to ask about somebody I did not ask about. I asked about Amin and he thought I referred to General M'boto. He replied as I have already stated. His answer was correct, of course, because M'boto was at one time president of the Congo. Altogether, it was a comedy of errors. So that the record may be complete, I was referring and I did refer to Amin but, as I said, the House was in that feeling of high exhilaration which sometimes interferes with communication, but enjoyably so.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): On the same point, Mr. Speaker, there may even be more errors than the right hon. member understood because in my answer, and I did not see the blues, I did not say "President M'boto". I said "President Obote", who was indeed the president of Uganda when we had the last Commonwealth Conference, so this makes it even more complicated.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister for clearing up the whole matter. We all recall that even Homer nodded, so the Prime Minister and I were both in that category.

MR. OBERLE—ANSWER TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION NO.
984

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I will need Your Honour's advice on the validity of my question. First of

all, I would like to have the confirmation of the House that as the representative of the people in my constituency, as the representative of people who put their trust in my office, I am entitled to ask questions of the government. I should also like to have it confirmed that after I have asked these questions the answers that I get to such questions are factual and are answers on which I can base further action.

I placed on the order paper question No. 984 dealing with the Inter-American Indian Institute. It is in three parts and the questions are simple. The first part reads as follows:

Has the government been requested to join the Inter-American Indian Institute and, if so (a) by whom (b) on what date?

The third part reads as follows:

Has any employee of the government, its agencies or Crown corporations ever attended any conference meetings or symposia sponsored by the Inter-American Indian Institute over the past six years and, if so (a) who were these persons (b) on what dates—

The answers I received to these questions are less than factual. I happen to know that there was more than one attempt by the Inter-American Institute to have Canada join. There were many occasions prior to the date indicated in the answer. I also happen to know that many delegations sponsored by the Canadian government attended these meetings.

These facts, Mr. Speaker, are underlined by a secret or confidential document which obviously is no longer confidential because I received it this morning. In it, an official of the government indicates that the answer to question No. 1 is less than factual. Another section outlines the reasons why the government is embarrassed about the Inter-American Indian institute. I quote from the document:

• (1410)

Indian leaders might be tempted on occasion to use the International Indian Institute as a forum in which they could put forward their grievances against the federal government.

Another paragraph in the document reads as follows:

The composition of the International Indian Institute would need to be carefully conceived as it could generate friction among native people in that it would be undesirable and, in any event, virtually impossible to exclude representation from the Métis and non-status Indian groups.

These are the reasons the answers to my questions are not correct. Here is yet another cabinet leak. As a result, I should like to move the following motion, if I may do so, seconded by the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Taylor):

That this matter dealing with the International Indian Institute be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections or to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members do from time to time bring to the attention of the House and the Chair the complaints