

ceedings it appears that the meeting is to be held on Thursday. There should be some explanation as to why this change has taken place. I do not suggest that my hon. friend (Mr. Lapointe) knows, but it does occur to me that this unfortunate committee is experiencing great difficulty in getting together. My understanding was that it was to meet on Tuesday in pursuance of notice, and I made my arrangements accordingly.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I do not think my hon. friend is in order in referring to the proceedings of a committee of the house; I think that is distinctly against the rules.

Mr. BENNETT: It is not against the rules to ask a question if there is a misstatement. I hold in my hand a copy of the votes and proceedings of the house, which are part of the public record of the House of Commons, and I am directing the attention of the government, who control the committees—

Mr. LAPOINTE: They do not.

Mr. BENNETT: They have a majority in them all, and that is what I meant by the control of the government. That is the kind of control we know in parliament; if there were any other kind of control the hon. gentleman would not be here. In the votes and proceedings it is stated that the committee on privileges and elections is to meet at 11 a.m. in room 424; it was to have met Tuesday and now it is fixed for Thursday. I suppose the officers of the house would be responsible for the change.

Mr. DENIS (Joliette): No doubt it is my fault, Mr. Speaker, but I did not quite understand the question asked by the leader of the opposition. If I might be permitted to do so, I will read his question and give an answer at five o'clock this afternoon or at eight o'clock to-night.

NATURALIZATION ACT

STATEMENT BY CHIEF JUSTICE MEREDITH

On the orders of the day:

Mr. PETER McGIBBON (Muskoka-Ontario): I direct the attention of the Secretary of State to the fact that Chief Justice Meredith has made a public protest because he cannot get from the minister information which he requires, and I ask if this information will be given in future.

Hon. FERNAND RINFRET (Secretary of State): I have read the report sent out by the Canadian Press having to do with a judgment rendered by Chief Justice Meredith at Osgoode Hall, Toronto. In the first para-

graph of the report it is stated that the chief justice intimated that he had applied to the Secretary of State for assistance in arriving at a decision with respect to these aliens who were applying for naturalization, and that the minister had not responded to his request. I believe that is what my hon. friend has in mind.

I can only say that I am afraid the Canadian Press has been misinformed on the matter; I do not believe that Chief Justice Meredith would have taken such a stand, for the simple reason that he did not write to the Secretary of State in connection with this matter, and so could not have received any reply from myself. What happened was this: On April 9 Chief Justice Meredith wrote a letter to the Under-Secretary of State, Mr. Mulvey, which I will now read:

My dear Mr. MULVEY:

The same question in regard to naturalization in Canada of aliens, about which I had some correspondence with you a while ago, has arisen again, in the same place and in regard to the same class of persons.

The still unsatisfactory state of the law and the practice under the act has impelled me to put in writing some thoughts on the subject in the hope that they may lead to something being done to put the matter on a better footing.

Will you be good enough to give to me any assistance you can; and to read that which I have written and let me know your views of all that I have said?

The enclosed paper is merely a draft. I have done nothing yet.

On April 17 of this year the Under-Secretary of State replied as follows:

My dear Judge MEREDITH:

Your letter of the 9th arrived during my absence from Ottawa. I am very glad indeed to have your opinion upon the subjects therein touched upon in respect of the naturalization of aliens. This will be of great assistance to the Secretary of State in promoting a bill which is at present before parliament for the purpose of amending the Naturalization Act, eliminating the clauses which require applicants for naturalization to be heard by a judge. I agree with your view throughout. In fact, I have for years been trying to prevail upon the Secretary of State to put forward the bill which is now under consideration.

Mr. BENNETT: The memorandum attached to the letter has not been read.

Mr. RINFRET: I thank my hon. friend for the interjection, because this is also very helpful. On May 1 Mr. Justice Meredith wrote to Mr. McClenahan, local registrar at Milton, Ontario, in which letter he informed Mr. McClenahan that he was sending papers in reference to cases which were before the court, and in that letter he stated: