

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 22, 1962

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. HERRIDGE—REFERENCE TO EDITORIAL IN
TORONTO "TELEGRAM"

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege affecting the rights and privileges of every member of this house. I do so in relation to an editorial of yesterday's date entitled "Time for an election" in the *Toronto Telegram*. I do not object to the implication in the editorial that the opposition is directing parliament, for I can easily see the validity of this point, but what I do think is a statement in contempt of parliament is the following:

Within the last few days the Liberal member for Hull deliberately provoked the Deputy Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Herridge: The word "provoke" means "to rouse the anger of". The *Toronto Telegram*, then, is clearly implying that the Deputy Speaker acted in anger rather than in justice and according to the rules of the house in demanding that the hon. member for Hull withdraw certain of his remarks on March 16. This is a slight on the Deputy Speaker and therefore on the position of the Speaker of this house, in our opinion.

In these circumstances I move, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch):

That Mr. J. D. MacFarlane, editor in chief of the *Telegram*, be called before the bar of the house to apologize for this insult to parliament.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pigeon: A good joke.

Mr. Speaker: Before the hon. member is permitted to place this motion before the house it is my duty to determine whether or not there is a prima facie breach of privilege involved in the editorial of which the hon. member complains. I naturally approach this subject with every intention and desire of protecting the good name of the chairmen and speakers of the house, which of course is essential to do if the house is to carry out its high responsibilities. However, I find difficulty in following the reasoning of the hon.

member when he concludes that the Deputy Speaker is accused of having acted in anger simply from a deduction from the use by the *Telegram* of the word "provoked". If I may refer to the hon. member's statement of privilege, his objection is to the following words:

Within the last few days the Liberal member for Hull deliberately provoked the Deputy Speaker—

From the use of the word "provoked" the hon. member concludes that the Deputy Speaker is accused of being angry and therefore did not act as he should have acted. Therefore he concludes that the *Telegram* has accused the Deputy Speaker of acting as he should not have acted. In my judgment the inference taxes one's imagination too greatly to be accepted as the basis for a motion.

I find that the Concise Oxford dictionary says that "provoke" means "to rouse". Therefore the *Telegram's* editorial might be interpreted as meaning that the hon. member for Hull roused the Deputy Speaker. Other definitions are "to irritate; to instigate; to tempt; to allure; to call forth". I am afraid that although I agree with the hon. member's desire to protect the Chair, I could not accept the words complained of as being sufficient to raise a prima facie question of a breach of privilege of the house.

AGRICULTURE

DAIRY PRODUCTS—ANNOUNCEMENT RESPECTING
SUPPORT PRICES

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Acting Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the house of the government's intentions with respect to support of dairy products under the Agricultural Stabilization Act for the year commencing May 1, 1962.

Support for dairy products at the same level presently in effect will be continued for the forthcoming year. In order to increase the consumption of butter, and thus bring consumption and production into closer balance, the agricultural stabilization board will be authorized to lower its buying and selling price for butter from the current 64 cents to 52 cents per pound, effective May 1. This action will have the effect of reducing the price of butter by about 12 cents per pound, which should result in a price of from 56 cents to 59 cents at the retail level.