

Supply—National Defence

Minister of National Defence and the hon. member for Temiscouata as to the incorrect conclusions he had reached on having seen the Minister of National Defence going to talk to the hon. member for Temiscouata. He has withdrawn the objectionable words but immediately after withdrawing them he added something else. In his words there was an implication. Notwithstanding the fact that he was withdrawing the positive remarks that he had made he said the fact remained that the Minister of National Defence went to talk to the hon. member for Temiscouata, and the hon. member for Temiscouata came to speak to the chairman, and so on. From that there might be left the impression that the hon. member for Nanaimo was withdrawing the words at which the Minister of National Defence and the hon. member for Temiscouata took offence, but nevertheless what he had said previously might still remain in his mind to be true.

Mr. Fulton: He is entitled to that.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. Of course the point is difficult to judge. When the hon. member for Nanaimo says, here are the facts, and then links his statement of facts with the words previously withdrawn and says, notwithstanding . . . there may be something in the declarations made about which the hon. member has a right to complain. I know that the hon. member for Nanaimo, if he withdraws, does not want to withdraw and then leave the implication that what he has withdrawn still stands. I will read to him citation 240 of Beauchesne, third edition, which appears at page 103:

It has been formally ruled by Speakers in the Canadian commons that a statement by an hon. member respecting himself and peculiarly within his own knowledge must be accepted, but it is not unparliamentary to temperately criticize statements made by a member as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible.

In this instance it is easy to dispose of the question of privilege. I know that the hon. member will not want to leave any implication that whatever he withdrew before still stands.

Mr. Pearkes: Mr. Chairman, I have already stated that I could not hear what the minister said; and when the minister told me that he had not made any remarks I withdrew my statement, and I withdrew it without any question whatever. I then described certain scenes which we all witnessed in the house, and I do not wish to refer again to those matters because all hon. members in the chamber saw what happened. Perhaps I might be

[The Deputy Chairman.]

criticized for saying that the hon. member for Temiscouata provided a certain element of comic relief. I do not know—if that word is not acceptable, I am not going to press it.

But then I do come to a point which affects me somewhat personally. Reference was made to a former minister of national defence. He was a minister of national defence of whom I have a very close recollection, not as a member of the House of Commons, but as one of the officers who served under the minister of national defence. I frankly admit that on many occasions my views did not coincide with his. But I want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that I have a very vivid memory of an occasion when he visited the division I was commanding in England, and had to be wheeled around in a chair because he was incapable of walking. In spite of great physical pain he went to visit the troops of my division, and spoke words of encouragement to them.

The memory of that man's name is hallowed in my recollection, and I regard the late Colonel J. L. Ralston, who was then minister of national defence, as one of the great Canadians in our history.

As a Canadian, I feel somewhat humiliated in having to sit here tonight and listen to a vicious attack made upon a man whose memory I cherish, although on many occasions I did not see eye to eye with him in some of the judgments he made.

Mr. Pouliot: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Pearkes: I want to say that.

Mr. Pouliot: I rise to a question of privilege.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Pouliot: I rise to a question of privilege.

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member is rising to a question of privilege.

Mr. Pearkes: I have no desire to discuss that point any further.

The Deputy Chairman: Order.

Mr. Pearkes: There is one thing I should like to say—

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Nanaimo will understand that when another hon. member rises to a question of privilege, it must be taken up immediately.

Mr. Pouliot: Mr. Chairman, I cannot thank you, but I appreciate the fact that you want the rules of the house to be observed.

An hon. Member: More than you do.

Mr. Pouliot: And by all members. I regret the words which have been just uttered by