

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 23, 1969

The house met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. MAHONEY—COMPLAINT RESPECTING
PRESS REPORT ON INDEMNITY
TO MEMBERS

Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising out of newspaper reports on a question I directed to the Prime Minister during oral question period last Friday. In my question I indicated that Metropolitan Toronto plumbers working a 37½ hour week would, as a result of recently concluded collective bargaining, be paid more than Members of Parliament. A number of newspaper reports—and the particular one I shall quote is the Canadian Press report contained in Saturday's *Ottawa Journal*—stated:

Members of parliament are paid \$18,000. Of this amount, \$6,000 is tax free."

Little wonder that the headline "Plumber's Pay to Top M.P.s?" ended with a question mark.

The newspaper report would indicate, since \$260 times 52 does not exceed \$18,000, that the factual foundation of my question was not valid. This is an implication which I emphatically deny. I have no information on how plumbers are reimbursed the expenses they incur in the exercise of their trade. I was not comparing the expense allowances of M.P.s and plumbers. I was comparing salaries or wages, and the plumbers' 52 times \$260, or \$13,520, certainly exceeds the M.P.s' \$12,000 annual indemnity.

Mr. Speaker: In spite of the obvious support received by the hon. member for his alleged question of privilege I suggest that the matter should not be pursued further. It is not, actually, a question of privilege, and we ought now to go on to another matter.

I might inform hon. members that this seems to be an allotted day for questions of privilege, having in mind that the Chair has been formally advised of three such questions, the second of which is in the name of the hon. member for Edmonton West. Shortly thereafter, notice of a question of privilege was sent to me by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre in connection with

approximately the same subject as the one raised by the hon. member for Edmonton West. I do not think it will be necessary for each question to be presented to the house separately; for the time being I will invite the hon. member for Edmonton West to indicate what his question involves.

MR. LAMBERT (EDMONTON WEST); MR.
KNOWLES (WINNIPEG NORTH CENTRE)—
IMPARTIALITY OF CHAIRMEN—PRESS RE-
LEASE BY CHAIRMAN OF PROCEDURE COM-
MITTEE

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): I thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question of privilege is briefly as follows: One of the matters to be considered by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization was the degree of impartiality and conduct of the chairmen of the house standing and special committees and whether they should assume a position comparable to that of the chairman and deputy chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

Notwithstanding this referral, which has not been adjudicated upon by the standing committee, the chairman, without authorization of the committee, or even discussion at the last meeting, has seen fit to issue a press release, in his own name, on Friday, June 20, —I have attached a copy to my notice to Your Honour—wherein he pleads the case for the adoption of the proposed rule 75C as referred to in the standing committee's third report. This report was adopted by the government majority on the committee, with all opposition members present at the meeting voting against it.

It is contrary to all the principles of our committee system and the role of committee chairmen to so act unilaterally and in a partisan manner. As such, this action by the chairman constitutes a breach of the privileges of the members of the house and of the committee.

● (2:10 p.m.)

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Your Honour is correct, Mr. Speaker, in saying that my question of privilege is the same as that which has just been raised by the hon. member for Edmonton West. Since he has stated it clearly, there is little I should add. I might just say, however, in