

Question of Privilege

That is why the standing committee asks for permission of the house, and I hope the house will see fit to give that permission to this committee regardless of what may be the feeling with respect to the other committees.

Mr. Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the wish of the house to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it. I declare the motion carried on division.

Motion agreed to on division.

PRIVILEGE

MR. NUGENT—ALLEGED CHANGE IN OFFICIAL REPORT OF DEBATES

Mr. Terence Nugent (Edmonton-Straithcona): Mr. Speaker, I wish to refer to a question of privilege affecting all hon. members in this house. It has to do with the transcript of the record of debates in this house for yesterday, and with what I believe to be an unwarranted change which has been made in that record by someone.

I am referring to some of the remarks made by the Prime Minister in this house, as reported in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* for Wednesday, May 4, and as reported in the *Ottawa Journal* for the same date. Two words appear to have been deleted, for some reason or other, from the record. I do not think the words which have been deleted change the sense of what was said. The sentence quoted means the same whether or not the missing words are included in it. The important point is, what does this house allow by way of interference with the record as it is taken down by the shorthand reporters? Certainly I think we all agree that an hon. member, in order to make sense of ambiguous statements, may change some words as taken down by the reporter, for the sake of clarity.

[Mr. Hales.]

I do not think that is the case here. The words in question that I refer to are a part of the Prime Minister's statement referring to the testimony of Commissioner McClellan. The *Ottawa Journal*, on page 17, says:

I was looking for that kind of scandal in relation to members of parliament with government departments and their intervention on behalf of dubious elements.

In *Hansard*, page 4632, the words "of scandal" have been deleted. In the *Globe and Mail* version of the same story the same words appear. I will read the paragraph, if I may, to make clear what I mean:

If he was talking about scandal in the sense of the Rivard scandal—and at that time the word scandal was being tossed about in this house without any reference except to political scandal—if the commissioner was referring to that kind of scandal, I was looking for that kind of scandal in relation to members of parliament with government departments and their intervention on behalf of dubious elements.

At page 4632 of *Hansard*, part way down the right hand column appear the words:

—if the commissioner was referring to that kind of scandal I was looking for that kind in relation—

And the words "of scandal" have been deleted in the *Hansard* record.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nugent: The point is simple, Mr. Speaker. The meaning is approximately the same whether or not the missing words are in the sentence or not.

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Mr. Nugent: There is no reason why a person should claim the right to go to the *Hansard* office, save for the purposes of accuracy to make sense of what he has said. There is no right to interfere with the record. What has been done establishes a precedent, Mr. Speaker, whereby hon. members have the right to go to the *Hansard* office to see if they can improve the language of their speeches. Perhaps something looks better if it is put in a certain way. If certain words are repeated too often, is the aesthetic sense of what has been said affected? I do not think the members of this house have ever pretended that anyone has the right to so varnish his speech.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, here we have had the extraordinary spectacle of the house being asked, on a question of privilege, to take newspaper accounts of what was said rather than the official record of *Hansard*. There is