

Report on Commonwealth Conference

I say that, sir, is very definitely a complete abrogation of the rights of this house, and therefore I hope you are going to accept this motion to refer the matter to the committee on privileges and elections.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, this is one of the matters on which it is difficult to reach a decision without having the documents in front of you. It has perhaps come as a surprise to most hon. members of the house. Your suggestion of reserving judgment until tomorrow I think is a wise one.

Mr. Speaker: Then with the leave of the house I will let this matter stand for consideration and disposition tomorrow. It raises rather a novel point. Is it really more than an improper use of the stationery of the house and does it involve the privileges of the house? There is a question which I wish to consider and which hon. members might consider.

COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE**WELCOME TO PRIME MINISTER ON RETURN
—REPORT ON MEETINGS IN LONDON**

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I hope you will not rule me out of order if under motions I express the warm welcome of the official opposition to the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) on his return to the house after what was, I know, a very arduous as well as a very important mission. We are delighted to see him looking so well; arduous missions seem to have that effect on him. Perhaps while I am on my feet I might venture to suggest to the Prime Minister that he should make a report to the house at this time on his mission abroad.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I should just like a moment in which to associate the C.C.F. group with the words of the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming the Prime Minister on his return to Canada after having taken part in this very important commonwealth prime ministers' conference.

Those of us who have known the Prime Minister for many, many years realize that he is an excellent traveller, and that experiences which might fatigue the average man seem to be taken by the Prime Minister in his stride. I think the right hon. gentleman thrives on this kind of arduous work. We are sincerely pleased to see him back in such good health.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I must say such a heartwarming reception is something that [Mr. Winch.]

touches me very deeply. I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his words of greeting, and to tell him that I had rather expected an opportunity might be provided to make a statement which may be somewhat more lengthy than is ordinarily made, with the leave of the house, on motions.

I wish to thank the hon. member for Assiniboia for his very generous references with regard to my ability to travel. One of the great difficulties I experience is this, Mr. Speaker. These occasions, for some reason or another, do not entirely coincide with my efforts to maintain my weight at a reasonable level. I think that is one of the difficulties I have; attending meetings such as this has, for me, a rather challenging effect, and one of these times I am going to call in the hon. member for Essex East to give me some ideas in connection with this very difficult problem that I face.

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): Would the Prime Minister do the member for Essex East the great honour of calling him on other matters as well?

Mr. Diefenbaker: I would think that calling the hon. member in on so weighty a problem it might be sufficient, but it may be that there will be other occasions in future.

At this time, having expressed my thanks and very deep appreciation for the attitude taken by both hon. gentlemen who have spoken and by the house in general, may I begin by referring to the communiques which were issued. They have been analysed at length, and I propose to ask the leave of the house, in accordance with past experience in this regard, to have the first communique of May 3 and the final communique at the termination of the conference printed as an appendix to *Hansard*.

However, even in following this course it is necessary for me to elaborate to some extent upon the main trends and, as I see them, the achievements of the meeting. I came back from the London conference feeling that, bearing in mind the difficult circumstances arising from the situation in South Africa, the conference was generally useful and successful.

Many observers have, of course, pointed out that the proceedings of the meetings did not result in any perceptible change in the attitude of the South African government. It was not to be expected, however, that magic improvements could take place in a situation of such tension and complexity. I believe that those who in future will examine and judge this period in commonwealth history will decide that this meeting did not fail to respond to the stern test to which it was put.