

House of Commons

house; I am not blaming any hon. members; I do not say that you did not provide me with a chance to be heard. But I just say that, in order to ask you to understand what may be my personal position, I am somewhat tense about this. I am not going to say anything further with respect to the event nor as to whether the opinions that have been expressed have been right or wrong, but I want to say this. The fact that I have not been heard—well, as I say, I have been tense about this ever since and I have been looking up authorities.

The hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) just interjected a moment ago, "You had the right to be heard". I am inclined to go along with his view because I have looked at a debate which took place in 1931 when the deputy speaker, Mr. LaVergne, had been attacked by the then member for Labelle, Mr. Bourassa and later rose to speak. Mr. King on a question of privilege indicated that the deputy speaker should not take part in any debate. The debate took place on March 20, 1931, and it will be found in volume I of the debates for 1931, pages 173 to 180. In defence of Mr. LaVergne, in justifying his contention that he had the right to speak if he was attacked, Mr. Bennett said that in exceptional cases he thought the Speaker was warranted in taking the action he did. He was referring to the case of 1927 when Mr. Speaker Lemieux had spoken in the debate in this house and then later he said:

Obviously the Speaker cannot take part in the debate and preside at the same time.

Then later he said:

... if the deputy speaker is not to participate in debate obviously he should not be attacked. That is fair. How but by participation in debate would he be able to answer attacks made upon him? That, Mr. Speaker, seems to be the crux of the whole matter and it will be found that Sir Robert Borden in discussing the matter of a resolution of the then leader of the opposition, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, directed the attention of the house to that particular point. Is it right merely because one of our hon. members has been elected chairman of committees and chairman of the committee of the whole house that he should be deprived of the right to speak to the house?

And then later he said:

Let us, however, consider what happened the other day when he was attacked in this house.

He is referring to Mr. LaVergne.

As a member he takes his seat and as one of the deputies of this chamber is he to be silent? May he make reply? Is it right that he should be silent?

Later on he said again:

Has his acceptance of the position of deputy speaker placed him in a position where he can no longer reply to the attacks which are made upon him?

[Mr. Speaker.]

And he concluded that part of his remarks by saying this:

I still claim for the deputy speaker, as I would claim for any other member of the house, the right to make any response he thinks adequate to any attack that may be made upon him. In other words, you should not make him a judge unless you treat him as such; and if you enter into controversy with him you must afford him an opportunity to answer the observations directed to him.

At that point Mr. King interjected:

No one denies that.

Looking further back into the record I find that in 1814, when Mr. Speaker Abbott had a motion of censure moved against him in the United Kingdom, he did take part in the debate soon after Lord Morpeth had moved the motion against him. His speech will be found in *Hansard* of 1813-14, volume 27, extending from column 475 to column 485, which I would think would be the equivalent of a 40-minute speech.

I am very sorry that part of that letter has been quoted. I may say that, as if I did not have enough trouble so far, I was certainly hoping that no other trouble would arise and I was greatly shocked when I saw that those paragraphs had been taken out of that private letter and put in a newspaper article.

Having said that, that view having been made public, I understand that it might arouse the indignation of some hon. members in this house when someone says that someone distorts the facts for his political ends.

Mr. Drew: Falsifies.

Mr. Speaker: Or falsifies. Of course if you want to use the most prejudicial translation you will use the word "falsifies" but for my purpose the translation would be "distorts".

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would Your Honour table the letter?

Mr. Speaker: I will table that letter if the hon. member wishes me to do so. I do not know to what extent I can as this is private correspondence. Would the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) be good enough to take a look at all the correspondence and then if he wants it—I do not table documents—to be circularized I could have mimeographed copies made of the translation of every letter. I might explain what the correspondence is about. The first letter I received from the hon. gentleman was dated May 14, 1956, in which he asked for an interview. Perhaps I should give my own translation and the hon. member can check when I send him the documents. He asked:

Would you be kind enough to give me an interview of a few minutes at your office in the near