

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 13, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. NUGENT—OBJECTIONS TO STATEMENTS
BY DEFENCE MINISTER

Mr. Terence Nugent (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege arising out of a statement made by the Minister of National Defence which is to be found on page 8583 of *Hansard* of October 12. The sentence I object to is as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I cannot give consent to reverting unless the hon. member is willing to indicate that he will put forward a serious motion rather than a spurious one.

The word "spurious" impugns my honour and integrity in connection with the charge I made against him yesterday. I did not raise this question last night; although I was here in my place and heard the minister speak I did not hear that word, or I am sure it would have impressed itself on my mind. Perhaps I thought he said "furious", which would not have been objectionable.

At first I thought perhaps that one word in itself would not give rise to the serious question of privilege I now raise, but on looking over *Hansard* and the entire list of statements which the minister made in this house yesterday there is obviously a course of conduct followed by the minister which would lead me to believe he was trying to give this house the impression that I was not making a sincere attempt to bring before this house something which I think is of the greatest importance.

In order to fully understand the intended connotation of the word "spurious" one need only look at *Hansard* and read similar words. Taken together these words can only mean one thing. I have looked up the word "spurious" in the dictionary and there are three definitions worthy of quoting. The word is stated to mean "not genuine". Another definition of that word is "not being what it pretends to be", and yet another is "not proceeding from the pretended source".

In order to establish that this is a serious question I will later on give the house the text of the motion I moved yesterday, which shows the intent and scope of the question. First I should like to refer to two or three references in *Hansard* where similar types of words were used. At page 8572 there are two references. The first is this:

Mr. Speaker, obviously no one is more interested than I in having these slanderous insinuations dealt with in a proper fashion and in a proper forum.

The word "slanderous" in that context certainly imputes that this was not a serious question and that I did not proceed in an honourable way. At the top of the same page the minister said:

• (2:40 p.m.)

It is clear that the object of this exercise is merely to frustrate the business planned for this afternoon.

I did rise on a question of privilege at that point objecting to the minister imputing an improper motive. I will not read it again but would remind the house of its context, namely that I considered the suggestion to be part of a planned campaign to discredit as dishonourable what I claim to be an honourable motive in making the charge in this house.

As reported at page 8577 the minister, when referring to the charge, said:

And also a trifle evasive.

This was said as though I had not leaned over backward to make the charge specific and to make sure there could be no misunderstanding of its meaning, and as though in fact I had not gone out of my way to explain it in every way possible because I felt the minister had the right to know what the facts were upon which I was relying to prove my charge. On page 8583 of *Hansard* there is the word I have objected to, namely that this was a "spurious" charge. Then on page 8581 the minister made this statement:

—"tampering" is so broad that it could include scratching your back.

When we consider all these remarks and the word "spurious" we can understand why one of the difficulties we ran into yesterday was the fact that I did not have an opportunity to bring before the house the actual facts alleged, the importance of the changes