

mutual good fellowship, and conscious of their duty to assist in making Canada a happy, prosperous and united country.

On motion of Mr. Arthurs the debate was adjourned.

On motion of Mr. Robb the house adjourned at 10.05 p.m.

Friday, February 24, 1928

The house met at three o'clock.

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEES

Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Minister of Justice): On behalf of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), I beg to move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb):

That the names of Messieurs Duff, Sinclair (Queens), Jacobs, Descoteaux and Glen be substituted for those of Messieurs Bourgeois, Boivin, Delisle, Fafard and Steedsman on the select standing committee on agriculture and colonization.

That the name of Mr. Lacroix be substituted for that of Mr. Kay on the select standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines.

That the name of Mr. MacLaren be substituted for that of Mr. Price on the select standing committee on marine and fisheries; and

That the name of Mr. Price be substituted for that of Mr. MacLaren on the select standing committee on printing.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE—MR. BIRD

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. W. BIRD (Nelson): I rise to a question of privilege. I wish to quote from an article which appears in *The Evening Guide*, a newspaper published at Port Hope, Ontario, and I trust the house will restrain its sense of humour until I have concluded the quotation. The article in question, which appears in the issue of this newspaper of Monday, February 13, in commenting upon the bill which was introduced in the house a few days ago by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth), for the purpose of amending the criminal code in respect of blasphemy, makes this statement:

The personality of those who supported the bill is worth a passing notice. It was introduced by Mr. Woodsworth and supported by Mr. Bird.

That is misstatement No. 1.

Remarkable to relate both these members of the house are ex-clergymen.

Misstatement No. 2: I am no more an ex-clergyman than the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett) is an ex-lawyer.

[Mr. Bourgeois.]

The former was a teacher or professor in the Winnipeg Methodist Theological College a few years ago.

This, I understand, is false: misstatement No. 3.

The latter was a prominent preacher of the gospel in one of the western provinces.

That is a slight exaggeration.

The question might very well be left just here, without note or comment.

But apparently the writer cannot withstand the temptation to slander, so he proceeds:

All that might be said of this extraordinary exhibition will readily occur to every right-thinking person. One cannot but hope that in the inner consciousness of each of these gentlemen some ray of light may pierce through the outward darkness that enshrouds what was once their better selves. Milton depicts Lucifer's fall as immeasurably tragic, because he had held an honoured place with the most high. One wonders at the strange perversion of an erstwhile religious mind contemplating the advisability of removing all restrictions to the flood-gates of heart-breaking, vile, shocking and contemptuous blasphemy, under the childish plea that liberty of speech is being fettered. It is a sad commentary, however, that the withdrawal of clergymen from their calling and their entry into public life in this country, has been disappointing and in many cases truly tragic. In no single case has any one of these clergymen been anything but a disappointment. Not a few but have gone wrong morally.

So much for this paper. I turn now to *The Port Hope Daily Times* of February 17. This newspaper prints the following:

The Rev. Mr. Woodsworth and the Rev. T. A. Bird of Nelson—

Not ex-clergymen this time.

—want to strike out the section of the criminal code under which Sterry was convicted, so that in future particularly red orators would be free to blaspheme at will. The language used by Sterry in the paper he published was of a most revolting character and made cold shivers creep up the spines of even those who cannot be termed religious, and one of the ministerial members of the house is so much enamoured of it that he attempted to read it to the house. Hon. Mr. Bennett, however, objected to the pages of Hansard being thus polluted and Rev. Mr. Bird took a second thought and desisted.

I will overlook the comparison between the religious zeal of the leader of the opposition and that of myself; it is very much to my disadvantage. However, I want to say that in regard to the first—

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. We have on two or three occasions in the past listened to personal explanations from members of this house, to corrections of misstatements, or to commentaries on statements or articles which have appeared in the press. Possibly we were right in treating these as matters of privilege, but I respectfully submit that we should not regard as a