

Redistribution

the seriousness with which I should apply myself to my duties in the house I am not going to take him as my pattern.

Mr. Graydon: His estimates are always out.

Mr. Dickey: You could do a lot worse.

Mr. Fleming: I think this is a matter on which all members of parliament will need at some stage to take their responsibilities seriously; and when I say the Minister of Finance in his later interjections yesterday tried so desperately to repair the political damage done by his first and very frank statement, "The public do not care", I think you have an estimate of the extent and the nature of the blunder made by the Minister of Finance and his appreciation of it. It is like those budget blunders with which we are so familiar.

I then continue to quote from the record. After the hon. member for Ottawa West said, "No, he did not", the *Hansard* record shows that he did. I continue to quote:

Mr. Fleming: The Minister of Finance said that the public does not care and members on this side of the house besides myself heard him say it right now.

Mr. Abbott: The public does not care about this discussion; it is only interested in the result.

Mr. Fleming: The Minister of Finance is trying to change it. The fact is that the minister said the public does not care and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Veterans Affairs said that the public takes—words to this effect—very little interest in what goes on in the house.

Mr. Mutch: On a question of privilege, I said nothing of the sort. What I said was that the hon. member overestimated the attention the public paid to what he said.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fleming: Just compare that statement of the hon. member for Winnipeg South with what he actually said as reported in *Hansard*. This is his actual statement:

The hon. gentleman is overestimating public interest in what goes on here.

Mr. Mutch: And you were going on.

Mr. Fleming: It had nothing to do with me. We were discussing the whole question of redistribution, so the hon. member for Winnipeg South is in the company of the Minister of Finance in trying to retrieve his blunder. Then, the record proceeds:

Mr. Fleming: No, no.

Mr. Mutch: Oh, yes.

Mr. Fleming: That is not what the hon. member said. He said we overestimated the attention paid to what goes on in this house. He did not tie it down to me at all.

Mr. Mutch: You were doing the talking.

Mr. Fleming: He said we overestimated the interest of the public.

Mr. Mutch: Leave it to *Hansard*.

We shall leave it to *Hansard*, because *Hansard* records the remark as follows:

The hon. gentleman is overestimating public interest in what goes on here.

Mr. Mutch: And at the moment you were going on.

Mr. Fleming: Then, I continue to quote from the record:

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Fleming: In these two significant comments, you have what it seems to me is a very complete exposure of the attitude of the government in this matter. What could be more plain?

The Minister of Finance takes the attitude that the public does not care.

Mr. Abbott: No, Mr. Chairman. What I said was that members are more interested in their self-preservation than the public.

You will search *Hansard* through, and you will find no statement on the part of the Minister of Finance that members are more interested in their self-preservation than the public.

Mr. Abbott: You just read it.

Mr. Fleming: He attempts here to say that is what he said, but *Hansard* does not contain any such words. *Hansard* does record, however, these words of the Minister of Finance, "The public do not care".

Now, Mr. Speaker, I come to the final subject that I want—

Mr. Gardiner: May I ask a question, Mr. Speaker? Who is this man Mr. Fleming who is referred to so often in the record?

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Speaker, he is a native of the same county as the Minister of Agriculture, who voted yesterday here to approve of the political carpentry perpetrated on that county of Huron.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we have—

Mr. Abbott: One went to Toronto and the other to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Fleming: Yes, and they both ended up here.

The final subject to which I wish to refer in these few brief remarks is the question of the time element. In what I had to say yesterday I urged that the public should be given an opportunity of understanding what is involved in the changes in the constituency boundaries proposed in the schedule to this bill. I said that could be accomplished in various ways. A conference had been proposed, but of course that constructive suggestion came to nought; it fell on deaf ears.

Then, there was another suggestion that this matter should be allowed to stand until a later stage. Bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, we are in the last hurried days of the session. This may be the last day of this session, and there is always a tendency at this stage of