

Supply—National Defence

Mr. Claxton: On a question of order, the hon. member for Nanaimo suggested that I, as a member of parliament and a member of the government, approached the hon. member for Temiscouata, than whom there is no less approachable member in the house, and asked him to co-ordinate our activities in order that we might provide some comic relief.

Mr. Pearkes: I did not say that.

Mr. Claxton: That is what he suggested. Now he has withdrawn that suggestion. He said that his conclusions were drawn from the circumstances. I ask, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. member for Nanaimo make an unequivocal withdrawal and apology.

Mr. Pearkes: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Fulton: On a point of order—

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Nanaimo.

Mr. Pearkes: I have only stated the facts, and I do repeat those facts: The Minister of National Defence did move across and did speak to the hon. member for Temiscouata. I have no knowledge of what he said. The hon. member for Temiscouata then came up and spoke to you, Mr. Chairman, and returned to his seat, and he was seen by you next. The hon. member for Temiscouata did provide the comic relief to this very serious discussion which was going on.

Mr. Adamson: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearkes: I fail—

Mr. Claxton: I think the situation is much more serious than that. The hon. member for Nanaimo, for whom I ordinarily have the greatest respect, has brought forward a suggestion that I proposed to the hon. member for Temiscouata that he should do something or other, and that he did it. I deny it absolutely.

Mr. Fulton: All right; you are entitled to do that.

Mr. Claxton: The hon. member for Temiscouata has denied it absolutely. There is no warrant at all for the assumption which has now been repeated three times by the hon. member for Nanaimo, and he should make an unequivocal withdrawal of the whole thing.

Mr. Pearkes: Mr. Chairman, I have been stating only the actual facts which happened as I saw them, sitting over here. The Minister of National Defence moved across to the seat of the hon. member for Temiscouata. I have no idea at all what he said. I did assume—

Mr. Pouliot: I rise to a question of privilege—

The Deputy Chairman: Order.

Mr. Pouliot: —if you will permit me. The hon. member for Nanaimo has made a statement in the first place which was untrue.

Mr. Claxton: Wholly.

Mr. Pouliot: The Minister of National Defence rose on a question of privilege to deny it, and I did likewise. The hon. member for Nanaimo then withdrew what he had said. After that was done he rose again to make a second insinuation, and this other statement is just as untrue as the first one. The two statements were untrue. They were to the effect that the Minister of National Defence had suggested to me to speak on this matter, and in the second place that the Minister of National Defence had come to me to speak to me before going to the back benches outside the chamber.

I will tell you, sir, that when I went to the chair it was to ask the chairman who was going to speak after the leader of the opposition. He said: "No one". I said: "Will you please see me after he sits down?" Then on my way back the minister did not say a word to me, but I spoke to him and I said: "I will speak to the leader of the opposition about the advisory council on manpower". That was all.

In the second place, as I said before, I asked for information, and in order to convey that information to the house afterwards I asked the Minister of National Defence as aforesaid if the leader of the opposition had asked him for detailed information about an item in the estimates. He did not say a word to me, just shook his head in a negative gesture. That was all.

Mr. Fraser: He spoke.

Mr. Pouliot: He did not say a word, and afterwards I was speaking, and I was looking in front of me and I did not notice when the minister left his seat to go. He did not say a word to me. I know the hon. member for Nanaimo to be a gentleman and I hope that he will withdraw unequivocally what he has said.

Mr. Adamson: He has nothing to withdraw.

Mr. Pouliot: And which is completely contrary to the truth.

Mr. Adamson: Nothing to withdraw.

Mr. Pearkes: I honestly do not know how much farther I can go.

The Deputy Chairman: Will the hon. member permit me to help him?

Mr. Pearkes: Certainly, I will be glad to.

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member has accepted the statements made by the