

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 15, 1972

The House met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. LAMBERT (EDMONTON WEST)—INCORRECT NEWSPAPER REPORT OF REMARKS CONCERNING GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT INCREASE AND WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCES

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday last during my remarks on the budget I made a distinct reference concerning the application of the guaranteed income supplement to war veterans receiving the war veterans allowance. I indicated at that time there was a strong possibility that most, if not all, recipients of the war veterans allowance who would receive the guaranteed income supplement would not receive the full benefit intended by the legislation. Unfortunately, on Friday a number of newspapers in the country carried a story under a Canadian Press byline which indicated I had expressed the view that the increase in the guaranteed income supplement would reduce war veterans pensions.

• (1410)

Mr. Speaker, there may be some confusion in the mind of the reporter as to what is a war veterans pension and what is a war veterans allowance, but there is clearly no difficulty in the minds of hon. members of the House. I said it was the war veterans allowance and I insist it is the war veterans allowance. I hope that the correction of this erroneous report will receive equal prominence.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

STATEMENTS BY MEMBER FOR YORK SOUTH
ALLEGEDLY REFLECTING ON JUDGES—REQUEST FOR
UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I regret the absence of the hon. member for York South, but I can do no other than endeavour to place a motion before the House, which I do with a very heavy heart. As one who has been a member of four of the bars of Canada and an honorary bencher of two and who has had his share of lawsuits in the courts, I have never found it necessary to attribute the results to a politically partisan court. I admit that Judges are not above criticism and they must be subjected to the constant searchlight of public opinion. But to condemn the judiciary blanket-wise as men virtually without integrity cannot be justified. That is the reason for the motion I wish to move under

Standing Order 43. Such criticism can only lead to national chaos and lawlessness, if not worse.

I will not say any more. I am being as restrained as it is possible to be under the circumstances. I ask the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion under Standing Order 43 concerning the blanket condemnation of the judiciary by the hon. member for York South on Saturday when, in a speech to the national conference of the United Steelworkers of America, he is reported to have said:

Almost everyone with few exceptions . . . the moment a defeated Liberal or Conservative is appointed to the bench, he thinks he's God. That's the characteristic of a judge who sits on the bench.

That means that the judiciary, unable to protect itself, is not independent. If that were so, the rule of law would become a memory, and the very vitals of our national well-being would be destroyed. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin):

That the subject matter of public statements made by the hon. member, and in particular those which are of a disparaging nature to the integrity and independence of the bench, be immediately referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has some doubts as to the procedural acceptability of a motion of this kind under Standing Order 43. I have the impression that the motion has implications of a charge against an hon. member, and that can hardly be made by means of a motion under Standing Order 43. I would think it would have to be made by way of a question of privilege making a specific charge against an hon. member which would then be debated in the House and, if found acceptable for referral to a committee, would be so referred.

At the same time, anything can be brought to the House for approval by way of unanimous consent. But before making a ruling on whether we have before us a motion under Standing Order 43 or a motion under Standing Order 17, I believe the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre wishes to rise on the point.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I simply wish to say that if this motion can be presented only on the basis of unanimous consent, we are prepared to give consent so far as this party is concerned.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): However, Sir, that is merely consent to have the motion presented. I should like to make it clear that there are one or two of our members who would like to speak to it. If there is unanimous consent to the putting of the motion, perhaps the time when it is called for debate might be arranged by agreement among the parties.