

Q. There is a matter which really might have been left out of this.—A. It happens to be in it, unfortunately. It should have been left out, but unfortunately it was not.

Q. But it was fair criticism for Mr. Gordon to refer to that appointment?—A. It was fair criticism for anyone to say that Mr. Herridge was unfitted for his position, if he desires. I think you might say that.

Q. No, I would not say that. I would call that unfair.—A. No, there are many men, Mr. Duff, who say I am unfitted for my position. That is a matter of fair criticism.

Q. Yes, I would almost say that.—A. But when you speak of my brother-in-law that becomes a matter of importance—

Q. No, sir, I am leaving that out entirely, Mr. Bennett. I think that is about all, sir. With regard to what you said about public men criticizing others fairly or unfairly, whilst it is quite possible that these statements of Mr. Gordon's were rather serious, has a retraction been made?—A. You saw what *The Globe* said about that editorially. It might involve the life of the government.

Q. Yes, but after that, Mr. Bennett, did you see the report in *The Globe* about the Cobourg correction?—A. Mr. Duff, my attention was directed to it. As you will observe, it is nothing else but a retraction. You would hardly call that a retraction. And might I say to you, not being a member of the bar but having some experience doubtless—

Q. I am a sea lawyer, don't forget that.—A. I always treat you as an Admiral, as you know, and not as a sea lawyer; but I just desire to say this, that there are well-known provisions of our law; when retractions are made and apologies are given the law provides for them very clearly, and if one makes charges either maliciously or otherwise an apology is always in order, and is usually accepted; but it must be just what it says, it must express regret for having maliciously made improper statements.

Q. Did you ever think of taking action against the *Globe* for publishing these statements?—A. Well, Mr. Duff, when I returned from the west and gathered together the information that I have just referred to I at once realized that the papers that had circulated these stories were liable; but the law says that you must bring your proceedings within a certain time after it is brought to your attention, with all that is involved in connection with just such a matter as that, and I thought the easiest and simplest way to deal with it,—because you must remember that as a member of the King's Privy Council for Canada, a King's Counsel and a former Minister of the Crown, he had made the statements and most newspapers published them on that basis; and in far distant parts of this country, in remote sections, these statements would be used for the purpose of alleging that the Prime Minister of this country had done these things. Under those circumstances how can you take action? The papers believed the story, presumably, made by one in that position in life, as having a foundation in fact, and my business was not with my own reputation so far as the country is concerned but to this parliament of which, for the moment, I happen to be the leader, and my duty was to try at least to show to my peers in this House that these charges were unwarranted. That is the reason I am here.

Q. Of course you would not say, Mr. Bennett, that because Mr. Gordon was a Privy Councillor that people would think he would have the right to make, or would believe any statements he would make. For instance, to clear my point, I have got some clippings of speeches that other Privy Councillors made which, in my opinion, are almost, if not quite, as bad as Mr. Gordon's.—A. Doubtless, Mr. Duff, that may be true; but a newspaper is warranted in publishing statements that are made by those who occupy positions of importance upon the assumption that they have considered the consequence of their actions