

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 25, 1968

The house met at 11 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

UNVEILING OF PORTRAIT OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members are aware that last evening a pleasant function for all concerned was held on the occasion of the unveiling of the portrait of a former prime minister, Right Hon. Lester Pearson.

Arrangements were made to take a verbatim report of the proceedings, and it is my suggestion to the house that the report be made a part of today's *Hansard*. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Editor's note: For document referred to above, see appendix.*]

PRIVILEGE

MR. SPEAKER—STATEMENT ON ALLEGED ALTERATION IN "HANSARD" REPORT

Mr. Speaker: I have now had an opportunity to look into the alleged alteration of *Hansard*, raised yesterday as a question of privilege by the hon. member for York South.

I have ascertained that as claimed by the hon. member for York South there has been an alteration in the Prime Minister's spoken words. The words "levying more money" were changed to "finding more money". Upon further inquiry it has been ascertained that the changes were made by the editorial staff of *Hansard* on their own initiative. Neither the Prime Minister nor his staff were consulted in making the alteration. The explanation given by the editor is that in his view the phrase "finding money" appeared to be more idiomatic than "levying money". This, of course, is a matter of judgment. Obviously the editor's opinion has not met with the approval of all hon. members of the house. At the same time I am sure most members will acknowledge that editorial changes normally tend to improve verbatim reports.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I see the hon. member for York South shaking his hands. I wonder whether he is going to withdraw his insinuations.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I do not at all blame the right hon. gentleman for suggesting that I acknowledge the fact that the change, which I think was substantial, was made by a member of the *Hansard* editorial staff and not by anyone in the Prime Minister's office, and I do so gladly. May I say I never suggested that the Prime Minister himself was responsible for it. I am delighted as a member of this parliament to learn that the staff in the Prime Minister's office was not responsible, and I gladly acknowledge it.

Mr. Trudeau: I am very glad for the acknowledgement, but I read in *Hansard* of yesterday that the hon. member said this was an abuse of the editing privileges which members of the house have. I think this was a very clear inference, and it was supported by the Leader of the Opposition. Now we find that neither I nor my people had done any editing on this, and I think the accusation was quite wrong.

Mr. Bell: Why don't you quit while you are ahead?

Mr. Trudeau: If this were the rule the hon. member followed he would never quit, because he has never been ahead on this. I said yesterday that I would stand by any word I used because I really did not see the significance of the point of order one way or the other. I am prepared to say I am very glad that the editorial staff of *Hansard* makes my grammatical errors appear less obvious. I have no objection if they do the same thing for members of the opposition, but I have been told that I have been using an undefendable editing privilege. Now the answer is that I have not, so I suggest that the hon. member for York South and the Leader of the Opposition, who agreed with him, admit that they made a mistake in suggesting I had misused editing privileges. Let us see him answer that.

• (11:10 a.m.)

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rose yesterday to