

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have not seen that article, and naturally I have no comment to make on it. Comments in this connection have already been made.

Mr. Chevrier: Since the Associate Minister of National Defence—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am doubtful whether the inquiries the hon. member for Laurier is making are a proper subject for a question at this time. They may be an appropriate subject of debate, but I fail to see what information he is asking for in the questions he has asked. I think one supplementary question is ample to allot to the subject.

Mr. Chevrier: Then may I ask the associate minister, who is so anxious to reply to this question, and who in effect has repeated—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Order.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Campbell (Stormont): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order—

Mr. Chevrier: The question, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Would the hon. member resume his seat. I raised a point of order myself. If the hon. member who apparently wishes to ask another question wants to discuss the point of order, he is permitted to do so. I will hear the hon. member for Stormont later if it is necessary.

Mr. Chevrier: The question I wish to put to the associate minister is this—

Mr. Speaker: Order. My question is whether the inquiries the hon. member is making are appropriate for the orders of the day. They do not seem to be a search for information. If the hon. member wishes to initiate a new question, I will hear him in due course.

Mr. Chevrier: Well, I am speaking now on a point of order, and it is this. The minister, having risen in the house and having made an apology for the statement he made earlier concerning his accusation that the governments of both these countries were of communistic nature, has in effect, in a television program in Montreal on Sunday, repeated the same accusations.

An hon. Member: On a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the hon. members in due course, but the hon. member for Laurier is now addressing himself to a point of order; at least I hope he is.

Mr. Chevrier: I was about to say that the minister has in effect repeated his accusations, if he is properly quoted in the report which I have now. On that basis I was about to

ask Your Honour's permission to address a question to the Associate Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the hon. member's question in due course and deal with it then. If either of the hon. members who rose to speak on points of order have anything else to say, I will hear them now.

Mr. Grant Campbell (Stormont): Yes. I do not think the hon. member for Laurier or anyone else is entitled to conduct an inquisition to serve his own party or personal ends.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member seems to be generating more heat than light with regard to the point of order.

(Translation):

Hon. Pierre Sevigny (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I very clearly stated to the house, on February 12, that I had not expressed myself correctly in a statement I made in Montreal. Having made that inaccurate statement, Mr. Speaker, I corrected myself. I have nothing to add to, nor to retract from, the statement I made in this house.

But I will say this. In an interview on television last Saturday evening, I did not repeat what I had said in a speech I gave in Montreal.

(Text):

But, Mr. Speaker, I said this; that in view of the week-end events, and in particular the events which took place in British Guiana; and in view of the reports which we have read and which have been written by commentators in the Canadian Press and other periodicals it is amply evident that communism is spreading in Latin America and is presenting a danger to world peace. That is all I said.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member seems to have taken the view with respect to the point of order that the subject is a relevant one, and if the hon. member for Laurier has a supplementary question—if a supplementary question is necessary—I will give him the floor.

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, I have, sir.

(Translation):

Further to the statement the minister just made, I should like to ask him the following question. Did he, yes or no, in his interview on television, use the following words:

Don't you see? Who is ignorant? Who was in error? Have we not here a communist government?

Did the minister use these words during his interview?

Mr. Sevigny: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe I used those words. I said this. In view of