

Question of Privilege

affairs. There has been no address. We have been asking what would be the nature of the government's plans in this connection, whether we would have the opportunity to examine, line by line and paragraph by paragraph, the draft of the proposed act. We have not been given that assurance. We do know, though, that no address which could be confirmed or approved has been passed either by this house or by the other place.

How this came about it is not for me to surmise, but I would ask whether the Prime Minister of Canada or anybody in any position in the government of Canada had informed the government of the province of Ontario that the address had in fact been passed by the two houses. Did the government give it to be understood by the legislature of Ontario that this address was going to be passed by the House of Commons and the Senate? Did it have that pre-vision as to the support that would be received by any such address? Whatever the reason, sir, and whatever the cause, we now find ourselves in a position in the parliament of Canada where one of the legislatures has passed a resolution approving that which has not been put before parliament in an address.

My hon. friend the Minister of Transport, who is an expert on casuistry and administrative enactment, laughs, but I doubt whether he has ever known of a similar case, although the hon. gentleman does have those means of extraterrestrial communication which I do not possess.

I simply say this, that what has taken place has to be explained by the Prime Minister as it constitutes an affront to the parliament of Canada. It places parliament in a position secondary to that of any of the legislative assemblies which may approve of a similar form. In other words, there has been in this case a serious dereliction in the rights and prerogatives of parliament, their interpretation and, as well, the implementation of that which has never previously taken place.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this question of privilege, if it is that—that is a matter you will decide, and if you decide it is a question of privilege you will no doubt take appropriate action—which has been raised by the right hon. gentleman invites me to make inquiries of his friend the premier of Ontario about the propriety or otherwise of action taken by the premier and the government of Ontario. I will be glad to do that, Mr. Speaker, and I will make the

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

necessary inquiries in a friendly way. Of course I am not in as close and constant contact with the premier of Ontario as is my right hon. friend.

Mr. Graffey: How about with the premier of Quebec?

Mr. Pearson: I will be glad to make inquiries into this matter to see if I can remove from the hon. gentleman's mind the question that there has been some secret and improper collaboration going on between the government of Ontario and the federal government in respect of this very important matter.

So far as I can understand that which the right hon. gentleman is getting at, it is criticism of a procedure adopted by a legislature of a province. If that is the question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and it affects the rights of members of the parliament of Canada—that is, the fact that the government and the legislature of Ontario took certain action—no doubt you will be in a position to make a decision.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It will have been noticed by you, Mr. Speaker, that the question I asked the Prime Minister remains unanswered. In so far as secret arrangements are concerned, there was no suggestion in my question that such had been the case between the Prime Minister and the premier of Ontario. Those are reserved, according to what we know about the pension legislation, to arrangements with the premier of the province of Quebec.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should answer that question at once. There is no secret arrangement of any kind between the premier of Ontario and myself in regard to this matter. Correspondence has been exchanged between the two levels of government in respect of this matter, but it is quite unworthy of my right hon. friend to suggest that I would enter into any secret arrangements with his friend, the premier of Ontario, which would affect the rights and privileges of this house.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, there was no suggestion made about secret deals except that made by the right hon. gentleman. I asked him whether he gave certain information to the government of Ontario, and he has refused to answer that question.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a question of privilege, but I am not sure that