

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 1, 1968

The house met at 11 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MR. DIEFENBAKER—FAILURE TO VOTE ON
FARM CREDIT ACT AMENDMENTS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, lest there be any misunderstanding regarding my absence during the votes yesterday on the Farm Credit Act amendments I should like to point out that in my private office the bell does not sound. Hence I was unable to be present, not knowing the votes were being taken.

PRIVILEGE

MR. SPEAKER—RULING ON QUESTION RAISED
BY MEMBER FOR GREENWOOD

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday, after due notice to the Chair, the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) rose on a question of privilege alleging that the minister for external affairs was directly or indirectly disputing the accuracy of a statement made by the hon. member reporting on a statement made outside the House of Commons.

After hearing the hon. member and the minister, the Chair reminded hon. members of the well established rule that hon. members are bound to accept the word of another member. May I refer on this point to citation 145 of Beauchesne's fourth edition, which reads as follows:

● (11:10 a.m.)

It has been formally ruled by Speakers in the Canadian commons that a statement by an honourable member respecting himself and peculiarly within his own knowledge must be accepted, but it is not unparliamentary to temperately criticize statements made by a member as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. A statement made by a member in his place, is considered as made upon honour and cannot be questioned in the house or out of it.

The Chair would like also to refer hon. members to citation 105, subsection 3, which reads as follows:

A dispute arising between two honourable members as to allegations of facts hardly fulfills the conditions of a privilege question—

Then I should like to refer to citation 113, which reads in part:

But a dispute arising between two members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

The motion proposed by the hon. member based on his question of privilege is that this matter should be referred to the standing committee on external affairs and national defence. It seems to me that all aspects of the Nigeria and Biafra situation have been referred specifically by the House of Commons to this committee. If the hon. member considers that the discussion should be pursued further, this could be done in committee without the special reference proposed by the hon. member's motion.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VIET NAM—CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN
PEACE KEEPING EFFORTS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister arising out of reports that the Department of External Affairs or the Department of National Defence has a contingency plan to facilitate Canada's participation in Viet Nam peace keeping efforts. Would the Prime Minister indicate in general terms what this plan involves, and especially what is contemplated in terms of Canadian forces personnel? What contribution does the Prime Minister think would be made by Canada?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am not in a position to answer that question now. The plans are too vague to make any definitive statement. We take the position that if we are requested to participate in any peace keeping activities we will have to ascertain in advance, before answering, what they entail and under what conditions we would participate in such activities.

Mr. Stanfield: May I ask a supplementary question. This proposal that has been made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs is conditional and limited by something which may seem to be appropriate to the government of Canada under the circumstances?