

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 21, 1951

The house met at eleven o'clock.

## PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO REMARK IN DEBATE OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Mr. J. M. Dechene (Athabaska):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I do not very often take up the time of the house. May I remind hon. members that I have not taken one minute during this session. Yesterday afternoon perhaps I was somewhat out of order when, good-naturedly and in the spirit of Christmas at this time of the year when we are again preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the Prince of Peace, I interjected, when the leader of the opposition was speaking, the words "Merry Christmas". If I did wrong I am willing to apologize but I do not think I did, and I do not think I deserved the answer made by the hon. gentleman. I have last night's *Ottawa Journal* which carries this report as to what the leader of the opposition replied:

"I am glad to see one of the members has anticipated the season," said Mr. Drew.

Such an insinuation was not deserved by me from that or any other corner of the house. I remind the hon. gentleman that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. But this matter goes further.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Dechene:** I wish to take just a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. The hon. members who are calling order have wasted hours and hours during this session and I have not. I am getting to be an aged man. I have been in public life for fifty years. I was elected a member of the Alberta legislature over thirty years ago, and I can boast that the reputation I left there is a good one. So far as the electors of the constituency of Athabaska are concerned, an unjust, unfair and uncalled-for insinuation of that kind will not do me any harm because I am too well known. It will only mean that the hon. gentleman's party will lose the few votes they had in that constituency. I am entitled to say that. I have some justice coming to me in this house as well as the hon. gentleman. I can trace my ancestry back to 1764.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker,—

**Mr. Fraser:** There is a limit.

**Mr. Speaker:** Probably the hon. member has gone far enough.

**Mr. Dechene:** I have a family to defend and a reputation to protect.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think the hon. member's reputation has been attacked in this house. I have given him considerable latitude. Probably he might conclude with a few remarks.

**Mr. Dechene:** I was only going to make a few more remarks. Ever since 1774 and the passing of the Quebec Act both sides of my family have been represented in the House of Commons or in the legislature either of Quebec or of Alberta. I am proud of that; and we will not stop there. That is why I felt I had to raise this matter and deny the insinuation.

**Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I am wholly unable to understand what the hon. member for Athabaska is speaking about. It will be recalled that during the debate yesterday, at a time when I was speaking and when we were discussing matters before the house, there was a very loud and clear interjection, "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas". I said I was very pleased to note that one hon. member was anticipating the season. I think a great many hon. members have indicated clearly that they are anticipating it. It was in that sense I meant my remark, and if the hon. member has taken any other meaning I am sure he has taken a meaning that was not the proper or correct interpretation of the words.

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, today is another day, and I am sure we were all glad this morning when we got up to see that the blustery weather of yesterday had subsided. I thank the leader of the opposition for the remarks he has made about the hon. member who raised a question of privilege. I am sure all hon. members understood the remark of the leader of the opposition in the sense he has indicated and not as disparaging in any way, because I know that all members hold the hon. member for Athabaska in high regard and recognize that he deserves our respect and friendship.