

Morality in Government

Prime Minister are statements in this category respecting himself and peculiarly within his own knowledge and not within the knowledge of the Leader of the Opposition. A statement made, for example, by the Prime Minister that he had no prior knowledge whatever of the disclosure of the name "Munsinger" by the Minister of Justice is a statement respecting himself and peculiarly within his own knowledge. It must be accepted.

Mr. Fulton: Read the rest of it.

Mr. MacEachen: As suggested by the hon. member for Kamloops, I will read the complete citation.

—but it is not unparliamentary to temperately criticize statements—

Is it temperate criticism to say that a statement has a distant relationship to the truth?

—made by a member as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible.

I conclude the citation by quoting this sentence:

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 Prime Minister has made a number of statements on his honour, upon which he has staked his reputation, and they must be accepted by the house.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacEachen: They must be accepted by the house. If the right hon. gentleman refuses to accept the statements made by the Prime Minister, then he knows the course of action to take. I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in this particular debate this rule ought to be rigidly observed. We on this side of the house intend that statements made by a member in his place be considered as made upon his honour and they cannot be questioned in the house or out of it. I respectfully suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that he was certainly on the verge of transgressing, if not transgressing, this particular custom of parliament.

Mr. Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, I think there is some inconsistency in the whole proceeding here. This debate is based on exactly what was said before the inquiry. If I recall correctly, a few minutes ago the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam quoted the whole statement from beginning to end

which was placed before that inquiry. I cannot see why the Leader of the Opposition, therefore, cannot talk about it since the whole debate is on that subject.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I can well understand the feelings of hon. gentlemen opposite because the Prime Minister chose to give his views as to what the evidence would have been if he had been the commissioner of the R.C.M.P. and had given the evidence as to the events. I was quoting from a Canadian Press dispatch.

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Some hon. Members: Filibuster. Closure.

Mr. Greene: You have ruled this out of order—

Some hon. Members: Closure.

Mr. Greene:—quite properly. The right hon. gentleman would like to get the evidence before this high court before it is all in before the tribunal. He does not want to hear the rest of the evidence of the commissioner. The rule is a very sound one because, of course, the witness has not yet been cross-examined. The right hon. gentleman does not want to wait for that. The rule is there for the very purpose of preventing half the evidence being discussed here before the whole of the evidence is discussed before the inquiry. Your Honour has quite properly ruled that it cannot be directly or indirectly discussed here until it has been heard in full before the inquiry. We cannot discuss half the evidence here, but the right hon. gentleman is transgressing the ruling. I ask the Chair to enforce the ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am a bit disturbed by the suggestion made by the hon. member for Mégantic that the evidence which the Leader of the Opposition now wishes to quote and put on the record has already been quoted by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam. If this was done, it escaped my attention. My understanding of what the hon. member said at the time was that it was a passing reference to this evidence in the same way as was done by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Douglas: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me absurd to deny any member the right to place on the record the