

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I did not.

Mr. TAYLOR. Well, that is the statement, and we will have it investigated under oath.

Mr. R. F. SUTHERLAND. It seems to me that no more contemptible course could be followed in this House than that followed in this debate. An anonymous letter is read—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Mr. R. F. SUTHERLAND. What is the point of order?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. The point of order, I understand, is that the hon. member used the word 'contemptible.'

Mr. R. F. SUTHERLAND. I think that was a perfectly parliamentary term to apply to this case.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. I do not think it is quite parliamentary to use the word 'contemptible.'

Mr. R. F. SUTHERLAND. If that is not parliamentary, I will say a course which this House would not care to see followed by any hon. member. An unsigned letter is read, a letter which the writer is afraid to sign, as an honourable man would sign a letter; the Minister of Justice rises in his place and categorically contradicts it. As soon as he has done that, the member hands the letter to a reporter at the door of the chamber for the purpose of having it taken into the press gallery and put in the press of the country; while his colleague sitting beside him honourably rises and accepts the explanation of the minister.

Mr. SPROULE. Let me ask the hon. member this.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Mr. SPROULE. I am going to ask him a question, with his permission. I was going to ask if it could be seriously objected that a reporter got the letter when the Minister of Justice asked that it be placed on the table of the House, where any one could get it?

Mr. R. F. SUTHERLAND. I am discussing the propriety of a member of the House handing that paper to a reporter after the statements in it had been absolutely contradicted by the Minister of Justice. I say that is a course which no reputable member of the House would take.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Order. Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order—

Mr. R. F. SUTHERLAND. I say, should take—

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Order. I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman said no reputable member would do as the hon. member for Leeds has done.

Mr. TAYLOR.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. The hon. gentleman cannot directly impute to a member anything disreputable.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. He has done so.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. If he has done so, he will kindly withdraw the expression.

Mr. R. F. SUTHERLAND. I say should not take that course. I am not prepared to accept any criticism along that line from the gentleman who rises to correct me, a gentleman who, so far as I have been able to gather during the last few weeks, distinctly lowers the tone of every debate in which he participates.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I am very much pleased with the elucidation the gentleman has given to this subject.

Mr. FIELDING. Order. I think the hon. member for Colchester (Mr. Gourley) has the floor.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Are you the chairman?

Mr. FIELDING. I was protecting the right of the hon. member for Colchester.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. It has been my privilege to bring into line one or two gentlemen on the other side of the House who forgot what was due to decency and decorum in this House, and there are a couple of others I wish to bring into line.

Mr. LANCASTER. While the hon. member for North Essex (Mr. R. F. Sutherland) was giving us a lecture as to what is proper and reputable conduct and what is not, I wonder that he did not ask the government whether their conduct of last session was to be regarded as reaching the highest extent of propriety, in getting a vote put through on the representations made by the then Minister of Public Works, and not apologizing or explaining more than they have done to-night. The hon. member for North Essex, we quite realize, is anxious to support this government in all they do. If he were half as anxious to know the facts of the case when he is voting away the money of the people of this country, he would be serving his constituents better than he is doing in lecturing people who are just as able to understand what their duties in this House are and to know what is proper and what is not, as he is. The highest sense of propriety that ought to prevail in this House is that propriety of doing our duty to our constituencies. Before we go into these finer and higher questions of propriety and ethics which the hon. member for North Essex wants to talk about, we had better do our plain duty to our constituents, and ascertain when voting money whether we are voting it in the interests of the country.