

Question of Privilege

deep regret, that when certain unpleasantnesses in this house have at last come to a conclusion a member of the government should find it necessary to rake them all up again and start another unpleasantness over again and make this parliament, which has so terrible a responsibility at the present time in the world's history, a matter for laughter and sorrow on the part of the Canadian people.

I am not going to make a lengthy speech, because I want to make a suggestion to Your Honour and to members of this house that this matter is unpleasant and undignified enough without lengthy speeches or any elaboration of the unpleasantness and the indignities. I suggest we vote on this motion and after we have voted—I hope, in its favour—that we take the necessary steps to implement it in the proper way—and I hope this will be before some committee rather than on the floor of this house.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): I wish to support what has been said by the two hon. members who have just spoken, particularly by my hon. friend from Yukon, who outlined certain statements which the minister has made. The minister today made certain statements which seemed to contradict quotations which have appeared in the leading newspapers of our country. This is significant and it goes to the heart of this question of personal privilege.

• (3:30 p.m.)

He has seen fit to hold two press conferences and when you analyse the headlines in the *Ottawa Journal*—no doubt similar headlines will appear in other newspapers—you will see he has made far worse and far more grave statements outside the house than he made inside the house. In addition, the fact that he was speaking outside the house makes the matter far worse than if he had made the statements in the house.

He has, according to the quoted statement in the press, implicated at least two Privy Councillors or more. He has said in the house once or twice—whether he has contradicted it I do not know—that there was no question of security in his mind. Yet outside the house he said, as quoted—and I suggest this is the most cowardly statement of all those he has made:

In some ways it was worse.

When asked if there had been an actual security leak he replied:

I don't know—but there definitely was a security risk.

[Mr. Lewis.]

Therefore he has by innuendo, using the former minister of justice's words, offended so far as the Privy Councillors of this house are concerned. He has dragged the House of Commons and parliament into the gutter. The other day he had a letter of resignation placed on the Prime Minister's desk—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Woolliams:—and the Prime Minister should have opened it because there is a great schism between the minister and the Prime Minister. I think the minister should get up and resign.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, you have asked for comments and advice with regard to a decision on whether or not there is a legitimate question of privilege before the house. I personally regret very much that this matter has been brought up in this way. Certainly it is not going to do anyone any good, let alone this house. Nevertheless the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Calgary North is in my opinion a legitimate question of privilege because it has to do with the integrity, yes, even the morality of men who are members of the Privy Council.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, without entering into any debate I wish to say it is our opinion that there is a question of privilege and that it must be allowed on that basis. I would only hope that this matter can be referred to a committee of the house. In that way we will be able to go on with the work that is before us and avoid taking a further part in dragging this house into the mud and mire, something that obviously is going to be involved in the situation we have before us now.

Mr. Churchill: Settle it right here.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I think the question of privilege is a legitimate one.

Mr. Cardin: Mr. Speaker, I do not write the headlines in the newspapers. The reason for my calling a conference was the numerous telephone calls I had from the press in order to explain the difference there was between my resigning and the decision I took not to resign.

During the course of the interview questions were asked about the Munsinger case and I did not say anything that had not already appeared in the press at that time. I should like to remind hon. members that during the course of the debate on the