

under colour of a motion to adjourn, but such charges were made on the personal responsibility of an hon. member. I did not propose to take notice of the charges when I heard that the hon. member intended to conclude with a motion to adjourn the House. But if any hon. gentleman wishes to make a charge against any member of the Government or any member of this House, there is a proper way to do so, and conform to the rules of the House, viz.: to make a personal statement on his responsibility as a member of the House, conclude his statement with a charge, and that charge must then be investigated. That practice has been followed time and again; but I never heard an hon. gentleman make a statement out of scurrilous newspapers, and attach so much importance to them, and yet dare not say from his place, I make that charge personally. The hon. gentleman would have the Government and the House act on idle gossip. The Government will not act on any idle newspaper gossip, but if the hon. member for East Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) makes charges on the floor of the House from his place as a member of this House against any hon. member of this House they will receive the attention of this Government.

Mr. FOSTER. I am afraid the rule laid down by the Prime Minister would unfortunately prevent discussion from this side of the House of any act of the Government or of any members supporting the Government, no matter how well known it was and how much it was being commented on in the newspaper press and by the public. He in fact says that no charge of misconduct against the Government or any supporter of the Government shall be ventilated in this House unless the charge is made on the personal responsibility of a member.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mulock). He did not make any such statement.

Mr. FOSTER. And that he, as a member of the House, prefers a distinct charge. I have been a member of this House since 1882 and I never have seen such a rule invoked, and I hope there never will be such a rule invoked in the interest of good government. It is one thing if I with my knowledge of certain things, having looked carefully into them, have come to the conclusion that there is a case of malfeasance on the part of a member of the Government, and I determine that it is my duty as a member of this House to prefer that charge and have it tried. But, Mr. Speaker, you know and every hon. member knows that not a day passes when in the recrimination and in the criticism of party politics there are not cases occurring on the part of the Government which have obtained notoriety in the newspapers, which go from mouth to mouth throughout the country, upon which we have no certain knowledge but that they

are being bandied from mouth to mouth, and from party to party, and when it is not in the interest of good government, and especially in the interest of the Government for the time being, that it should have an opportunity to clear its skirts of complicity or of any fault in that matter. It is a kindness to the Government to call these matters to its attention and give members of the Government a chance to deny them, if it can be done, or to palliate them, if they can be palliated; and if I were sitting on the other side of the House behind the Government, and a charge of this kind was being ventilated in the newspapers and talked over by brother members, I should consider it a kindness to me if it was so brought up that I could meet it with a square denial, if such were within my power. We are now told by the hon. Prime Minister,—and I hope, Mr. Speaker, your judgment will not carry so far,—that we cannot rise and say that it is a matter of common repute that the Government entered into a bargain to “saw-off” the protest in Saskatchewan, and that there is prima facie evidence that this had been done, for here is correspondence published in the public press, which has become current in this country. Forsooth, it is argued, that we cannot call that to the attention of the Government, and if it casts reflections on the member sitting for that constituency, as it must, we cannot call it to his attention so that he may rise and show it is altogether unfounded, if it is unfounded. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think you will have to look very carefully into your judgment on this question, or parliamentary government comes to an end if our mouths are closed, because this Government is not by any means immaculate. It has made many mistakes already and will make many more, and we propose as an Opposition to call the attention of Parliament and the country to those mistakes, and surely the Prime Minister will not say that before we make any such charges we must put them into form, make them on the honour of a member and ask for a committee.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. That is not the statement made by the Prime Minister.

Mr. FOSTER. The Postmaster General will have some cases. When he sat on this side of the House he was a great stickler for the freedom of Parliament, he did not want the Opposition to be gagged, and no gag seems to have been able to stop his mouth. The hon. gentleman no doubt would have been very glad if his mouth had been gagged to some extent. He would then have been not left to the imputation which he carries upon his brow to-day, and will carry all the years that he sits there as a Minister; that he made protestations of principle—

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Mr. Davies). Order, Mr. Speaker.