

*Reference to Statement by Prime Minister*

the Conservatives or the opposition are not assuming their responsibilities as they should, just as it is our privilege to reply to the Prime Minister, either on television or here in the house and I feel that he has obtained a good number of replies this afternoon.

But to conclude, Mr. Speaker, that there is really a question of privilege is an entirely different matter. I feel that the people on both sides should be free to say what they think, and that goes even for the Prime Minister of Canada.

The right hon. Prime Minister wanted to justify his stand, and he argued his case. The Conservatives argue theirs by saying that had the Liberals been here Monday night this situation would not have occurred. Indeed, approximately 45 Liberals were absent, but let us not forget that 42 Conservatives, 7 members of the New Democratic party, 3 members of the Ralliement Cr ditiste, 2 members of the Social Credit party and two thirds of the Independents were also absent.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Caouette:** Nevertheless, we must be frank, we must set the facts straight.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, this question of privilege could be discussed tomorrow during the debate on the motion of the right hon. Prime Minister. We will then have complete freedom to debate this question and to blame the Prime Minister for the things he said on television. However, I do not think it is in order to discuss this afternoon the speech made by the Prime Minister on television, nor any comments made by any member today or in the past few days.

I think we will have plenty of time to discuss this matter at length tomorrow, to say everything we want and to tell the government exactly what we think.

[*English*]

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion moved by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton). The only defence the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) made this afternoon, if it is any defence at all, was that he said he quoted certain words in the television interview. This is going to be my first point. He may feel that is some defence to the charge of slander in the sense that the word "slander" has been used by the hon. member for Kamloops, but I suggest to him that it is no

[Mr. Caouette.]

defence. Let us look at what the Prime Minister said. He said:

I am getting a lot of messages saying: "Are you going to let these people manoeuvre you by this kind of trickery into a general election at this particular time?"

In defence the Prime Minister says he was merely quoting somebody. I say he has left the wrong impression this afternoon, as he has done on many other occasions not only in this house but on television and radio, because if we turn to page 22 of the transcript we will find there are no quotation marks around these words which I am going to quote. They are clear, they are concise, and they are the words of the Prime Minister himself. But before quoting them I wish to say that the reason the Prime Minister adopted this defence was to introduce an element of comedy in reference to the serious motion moved by the hon. member for Kamloops. He thought he could say, "Oh, well, I just quoted somebody." But the words to which I will draw attention are his own words. They in themselves, so far as I am concerned as a member of the house, and indeed I am sure many hon. members will agree with me, constitute a matter of privilege involving every hon. member.

The Prime Minister used the word "trickery". The word "trickery" means some kind of fraud or dishonesty. As I say, these are the Prime Minister's own words. They are not in quotation marks. These are the words that went forth to probably a million people watching him on television. His defence today is not very sound and he knows it. In fact in my opinion, with the greatest respect to the Prime Minister and his position, he is trying to mislead the house today as he tried to misrepresent the situation on television. These are his own words to which I refer. He said:

Not by this kind of trickery situation last Monday night.

I repeat that those are the Prime Minister's own words, not a quotation. In his defence today, and I think it was because he thought no one would read all the 22 pages of the transcript, the Prime Minister picked out a passage on page 14. However, the hon. member for Kamloops dealt adequately with both phrases complained of, and so did the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill).

The only defence which the Prime Minister had today was that he was quoting somebody. We do not know whether he was quoting