

*Question of Privilege*

**Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** The minister said a moment ago that on Friday he did not make any allegation against any one of the former cabinet ministers now sitting on this side of the house. That is not in accordance with the facts. At page 2211 of *Hansard* for last Friday, hon. members will find this recorded:

I repeat he is the very last person in the house who can afford to give advice on the handling of security cases in Canada.

The reference is to the Leader of the Opposition. Later on, in the same column, the Minister of Justice used these words:

I want the right hon. gentleman to tell the house about his participation in the Monseigneur case—

**An hon. Member:** That's right.

**Mr. Nielsen:** I hear an hon. member saying "That's right". That is precisely the substance of the motion that is being made. I read on:

—to tell the house about his participation in the Monseigneur case when he was Prime Minister of this country.

If that is not an accusation of participation involving a member of the former government—

**Mr. McIlraith:** Give us the page reference.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Page 2211, the left hand column, two thirds down the page. Here are the words:

I want the right hon. gentleman to tell the house about his participation in the Monseigneur case—

**Mr. Pearson:** In the handling of it.

**Mr. Starr:** Read *Hansard*.

**Mr. Nielsen:** To the press, sir, the minister has charged that former Conservative ministers were involved with a former east German spy. He has said he would ask the cabinet to re-open the case. He has said there was an R.C.M.P. file—that he had not seen it, but was briefed on it. He has said that the Leader of the Opposition, the former prime minister, did not handle the case properly and should explain. He has said that the former prime minister never referred the matter to the law officers of the Crown. He has said that he learned about the case in another department. He has said the Liberals were tired of hearing the Leader of the Opposition insinuate that the government was plunged in scandals, and that the Liberals were going to fight back hard, using the same tactics.

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

**Mr. Nielsen:** He has said "We know she had been engaged in espionage prior to coming to Canada". He has said that more than one minister was involved. Indeed, some press releases are carrying reports that more than two ministers of the former government were involved. He has said that government action at the time was justified, but it is too late now, the girl being dead.

He has said he was not in a position to comment on whether there was a security leak. Notwithstanding the fact that he has not seen the file, he has said his objective was to press the Leader of the Opposition to explain his conduct in not turning the case over to the law officers. He has said it was a bona fide security case, again notwithstanding the fact that he has not seen the file.

On the basis of these statements, and in order that we on this side of the house may be able to present arguments, and make the minister account for his irresponsible and despicable statements outside this house—

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

**Mr. Nielsen:**—we urge that the motion be allowed, on the basis of the chronology which I have laid before Your Honour, which constitutes certainly one of the most serious and important cases of privilege ever to have come before this house.

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

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** With regret as to what is being done to this parliament—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Lewis:**—I want to say that we in this party cannot blame the hon. gentleman on this side of the house who moved the motion which is now before us.

It seems to us to be a clear point of personal privilege affecting every member of the cabinet to which the statement of the Minister of Justice had reference. It would have been to expect more of them than one should expect—that they should sit still and fail to raise this matter which concerns their individual personal integrity and standing in the country as spokesmen for a political party.

**An hon. Member:** Why not?

**Mr. Lewis:** I do not care how many catcalls are made from the other side or from this side of the house. I say to you, sir, that it is a great and deep matter, and one for great and