

*Privileges of The House*

And also the statement made by the right hon. the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) as set forth in *Hansard* of June 28, at page 4072:

A moment ago my colleague the Minister of Justice drew my attention to a statement made by the hon. member for Laval-Two Mountains which is of a very serious character. I had not up to that time observed the remarks to which my colleague referred as well as others and I was not in the house at the time they were made, but I find them in *Hansard* in the official report of the English translation of speeches delivered in French on the date indicated.

I wish to say that the hon. member for Laval-Two Mountains has made a grave accusation against three members of the government, so grave that the implied and, it seems to me, the only meaning which can be drawn from the statement is that these three unnamed members are using their position to accumulate fortunes. Although unnamed, as the statement now stands, all and every member of the government stand accused.

No more serious accusation could be made reflecting as it does on the integrity of members of the government, especially those charged with the executive positions of government. The hon. member must have realized the import of his remarks and duly considered the disastrous effect such a charge, if unchallenged, would have on public opinion, not only in Canada but throughout the world, especially at this serious period of our national life.

The Prime Minister has challenged the statement and has asked that the hon. member should be obliged either to withdraw the statement completely or else to convert it into a specific charge to be investigated in the usual manner.

If the hon. member so challenged refuses either to withdraw the charge or make a specific charge to prove the truth of his statement, he must accept that responsibility and govern himself in accordance with the practice usually followed in such cases.

I would be loath myself to apply rigorous measures against the hon. member. I am inclined to the view that this is a matter upon which the house should decide. At this moment we are dealing with what is a question of privilege and no formal proceeding is before the Chair. I must point out, however, that I view this incident with grave misgivings not only because ministers are affected, but also because the privileges of each and every hon. member are affected.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Standing order 41 provides:

No member . . . shall use offensive words against either house or against any member thereof.

If the house so decides, a motion can be made that this question be referred to the committee on privileges and elections for investigation and report, after which the house will decide what action should be taken.

I take it that the house will now expect the hon. member to make a statement, and I will ask him to do so now.

Mr. LIGUORI LACOMBE (Laval-Two Mountains): Mr. Speaker, I will not withdraw the words which are attributed to me in the English translation of *Hansard*, words which I never said, and which are attributed to me only by distorting the French text of my remarks. But first I would draw the attention of this house to the fact that the government has been delegating since the beginning of the war part of its power to numerous commissions where millionaires are sitting for a salary of one dollar a year. But these commissions are an integral part of the government or of the administration, which the opposition, to which I belong, has the right to criticize.

I point out to the right hon. the Prime Minister that my words were in no way directed against the members of his cabinet. According to standing order 41:

No member shall speak disrespectfully of His Majesty, nor of any of the Royal Family; nor of the governor or person administering the government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either house, or against any member thereof. No member may reflect upon any vote of the house, except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded.

Mr. Speaker, if I made a statement which is offensive to any member of this house, or to any member of the cabinet, I am prepared to withdraw immediately this statement, but I submit respectfully that I cannot withdraw what I never said. I repeat that if I have made any statement offensive to any member of this house or to any member of the cabinet, I withdraw it entirely and immediately.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I cannot see that what the hon. member has just said in any way meets the very grave situation for which he is responsible. His words at the outset were serious enough in their reflection upon members of the cabinet. From what I read of his explanation in the press he said that "le Gouvernement" did not mean "the cabinet," that it meant the party which supported