

*Morality in Government*

Speaker, that as a member of the privy council inadvertently information came to me about predecessors of mine, not only in my own department but in other departments. On no occasion, with one slight exception, did I ever divulge to my colleagues or other members in the house what information I had gleaned. That one exception was in the year 1959 when a member on this side of the house, a privy councillor, asked me a question in debate on a certain subject which, as I said earlier, inadvertently I had come across, and I did indicate by my statement that I understood what his position had been in that matter when he was in the cabinet. That may have been an improper use of information which had come to me inadvertently, and I would stake my life on the fact that this privy councillor and myself are the only ones who knew of the information that was passed. I say these things deliberately in order that the house may understand that in 1957 we were a new government; not one of us had ever been in a cabinet before, and the instructions I have mentioned came from one person only, the then prime minister of Canada, the man who today sits as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker).

● (9:10 p.m.)

I do not want the house to believe that this attitude was taken by the Leader of the Opposition purely on his assumption of office. The illustration which I shall now quote dates back to the year 1952. It took place in the town of Lumsden, Saskatchewan, in the month of June. It occurred at an election meeting I was attending as a candidate in the provincial election, as leader of the Conservative party in Saskatchewan, for the constituency of Lumsden. The speaker on my behalf that evening was the only Conservative M.P. in Saskatchewan, John Diefenbaker, Member of Parliament for Lake Centre, who is now Leader of the Opposition.

At that meeting was a member of today's press gallery with whom I have checked this story in the last month to verify my memory of this event. On this occasion a man named Rawluk asked at the end of the meeting whether he might read to the meeting a sworn affidavit. I am not a lawyer, nor was the chairman of that meeting. If my memory serves me correctly, and I think it does, I asked the speaker of the evening, who was a distinguished lawyer, whether he could guide us on the course of action we should follow. He asked Mr. Rawluk whether he might read that sworn affidavit. He read the affidavit and

[Mr. Hamilton.]

then announced to the meeting that the document would not be read at any meeting at which he or, he hoped, any other Conservative was present, because the allegations in it, even though sworn, would bring down in ruins the reputations of several leading public figures in Saskatchewan.

I quote this incident because the same gentleman, Mr. Rawluk, tried to get another M.L.A. named Benson to let him read the same document at one of his public meetings. This independent M.L.A. refused to read the document, I think on the same grounds as those of the then Mr. Diefenbaker. I point this out because it has a bearing on the situation we face in the house at this moment. The members of the legislature of Saskatchewan knew by the rumour-mill that these allegations were in the wind. It was in the month of February, if my memory serves me correctly, that the leader of the Liberal party in Saskatchewan, Mr. Tucker, read this affidavit into the record of the legislature, namely before the crown corporations committee of the legislature.

My remarks are now aimed at the members of the N.D.P. in this house, the successors of that party, the C.C.F. On that occasion the premier of the province of Saskatchewan offered to the opposition three types of investigation. If my memory is correct, the opposition chose a public hearing of these charges on the floor of the house through the forum of the crown corporations committee. Those hearings lasted for several weeks. They were attended by lawyers and representatives of all those people involved in the charges. As I say, Mr. Speaker, the hearings lasted for several weeks and the business of the province of Saskatchewan was held up until the allegations could be cleared away.

I have two points to make. One is that during the long period of the hearing of these terrible charges aimed at the premier and the senior ministers of the government of the province of Saskatchewan you never heard from the leader of the Conservative party in that province one word except in an effort to try to stop this awful going-on. Rightly or wrongly, I have fought the Liberals all my life, I have fought the C.C.F. as hard as I can; but I look upon members of both these parties as Canadians and fellow citizens of Saskatchewan who I hope some day will continue parliament in that legislature after we are all gone.

The second point I want to make is that during those hearings on several occasions I