

Administration of Justice

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Digby-Annapolis-Kings): Mr. Speaker, on this question of privilege I would say that the right hon. Leader of the Opposition has perhaps explained and amplified his remarks of yesterday. He identified me and my family by referring to a former member of parliament whose son now sits in this house. That description fits no other person than my father. The right hon. gentleman's remarks were made in an attempt to show how insidious this blanket accusation of wrongdoing has become. But I do not think, and did not think at that time, that his statement was complete. He has made a complete and fuller statement today.

However, I thought I appreciated the context in which the remarks of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition were made until I saw the national television news last night, when the commentator said, amongst other things:

As for today's debate, one big development was Mr. Diefenbaker's hint about the identity of one of the other former ministers mentioned in connection with the Munsinger case. He referred to one who is now dead, whose son is now an M.P., who cannot speak out because the government has not named names. Around here they know who he is talking about, but he did not elaborate for the record.

My fears in this respect were heightened when I received a distraught phone call from home early this morning advising me of the banner story in this morning's *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* which stated, amongst other things:

Disclosure indirectly by Opposition Leader Diefenbaker that former Finance Minister George Nowlan was being "mentioned as one of those two or more" in the rumours linking former members of his cabinet with Mrs. Munsinger—

Without being political or partisan, Mr. Speaker, I make a personal appeal to the Minister of Justice or the Prime Minister to stand up in this house and at least clear the dead, even though they refuse to charge the living. There are three ministers so exposed, Mr. Speaker; the late Sidney Smith, the late Paul Comtois and my father. Surely this parliament is not going to delegate its responsibilities in this regard and be dependent upon a serialized story 4,000 miles away. Unless the Minister of Justice or the Prime Minister can show the good grace and compassion they have, I shall have to consider whether I care to sit in this house while my father's name is under such a cloud.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, George Nowlan was my friend, [Mr. Diefenbaker.]

and a man for whom I had admiration and respect. Nothing I have read or seen in any report on anything has changed that admiration or respect, or modified in any way the high regard I have had and always will have for him.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I think in the context of the remarks which have now been addressed to this house, I must rise in order to deal with a situation arising out of yesterday's debate. It is not my intention to flog the Minister of Justice. I rise simply as a member of this house, as one who has occupied your position, as one who is conscious of the fundamental rights of this house and its members, as well as of the rules of this house and your responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, based upon those same rules and authorities that you, and your predecessors, have relied upon.

Today the situation is somewhat different. We have amended our rules from the day when I sat in your chair. There is no longer an appeal from your ruling. In this I heartily concur. However, in so doing I realize, having occupied that position, there is an even greater responsibility placed upon the Chair as the last repository of the rights of members, singly and collectively, against any undue action by a member, a group of members or the executive. In this regard we are all equal.

• (2:50 p.m.)

It is not my purpose to expound upon the policies of that new theory of justice that was propounded last night by the Minister of Justice, as reported at page 2628 of *Hansard*, in which he said that having made his charge it is then upon the Leader of the Opposition, who has seen the file, to indicate those persons who are not implicated in the charge. As a fellow lawyer, Mr. Speaker, I find that a strange theory indeed.

With these words, Mr. Speaker, I will close my remarks on this particular phase of the matter. The events of yesterday and the passage into today of this discussion have given us the opportunity of reviewing what the executive has proposed. The executive had Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday morning to consider this question, and they disclosed their proposals to the opposition some time in mid-afternoon on Monday. Since the rights of the opposition were so seriously affected, is it strange, Mr. Speaker, that I and my colleagues should want more time to put forward our views? It is not only the rights of hon. gentlemen on this side who are privy councillors which are