

Inquiries of the Ministry

totally and completely. I ask him to withdraw the insinuation and the statement that I did not.

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): I should like to speak to the point of privilege raised. I am certain that this statement was based on a viewing of the film by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle. I also happen to have seen it; and having seen the film, Mr. Speaker, I do not see how the Prime Minister can ask for a withdrawal of the statement by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle because it is based on what seems to me a legitimate point. I am speaking as one who has viewed the film. Either these ministers and the Prime Minister were appearing as actors playing a scene, some sort of facsimile, or there was a subcommittee meeting of the cabinet which a cameraman filmed and to which the producer had access.

I wanted to express this point of view to you in the light of the demand for a withdrawal; because unless we have a statement from the Prime Minister indicating that this was just a play game for camera purposes I am certainly left with the impression that this was a meeting of the subcommittee of cabinet in the Pearson film.

An hon. Member: Let the public see the film.

Mr. Pearson: There was no committee of the cabinet or subcommittee of the cabinet, no meeting of the cabinet which was filmed. I am informed, but I have not seen the picture, that the particular picture appearing in the press purporting to be of a meeting of the cabinet does not even appear in the film.

Mr. Fisher: On that point may I refer to the meeting which is shown in the film. It shows the Prime Minister in the chair. Then we have the Minister of Transport, who was then house leader, sitting to one side; then, ranged in order, we have the Minister of Labour, the then minister of transport and the Minister of Trade and Commerce. They are carrying on a discussion as to how to meet the problems and difficulties in Montreal. Then they go into the question of how to manage the house business and how to meet the difficulties that may be raised by the particular character and attitude of the Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fisher: This certainly gives the impression of a meeting of a committee or subcommittee of cabinet discussing government
[Mr. Pearson.]

business in relation to the House of Commons. It is either that or it is a remarkable job of acting. I think, Mr. Speaker, you should keep this in mind before you ask the hon. member for Qu'Appelle to withdraw anything at the request of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: I must say this seems to be my week of decision. In any event, each particular case has to be judged on its own merits and I do not think I have to deal with something that is over and, I am happy to say, finished with, I hope. However, I am faced with certain allegations. I have not seen the film. I have not even seen the picture. At this stage I do not want to. But when general allegations of this sort are made against the Prime Minister of the country and the Prime Minister in his capacity as Prime Minister says they are not true, I do not see how anyone can expect the Chair to rule on whether or not they are true. I have to take the word of hon. gentlemen in this chamber.

In view of the demand of the Prime Minister of this country and the fact that, if I understood correctly, he said the statements made were not so, were not true, it seems to me I have no alternative but to ask respectfully that the hon. member, who is making general allegations so far as I know at this stage, be kind enough to withdraw.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, you have the statement of a member of this house, the hon. member for Port Arthur, who saw this thing. He saw it. Certainly his word is to be taken too. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle has made certain statements, and I submit that when one hon. member is supported, as is the hon. member for Qu'Appelle, by one of the audience that was privileged the other day to see this film which has been suppressed everywhere else, the Prime Minister should not be pressing for a withdrawal. Otherwise, if he presses that point I am going to ask that we have this film so we can get the truth. I am going to ask that it be produced for the benefit of the house so we can find out by actual visual inspection who is telling the truth.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to speak for anybody else but I propose to say that I was telling the truth, the total truth, and I ask the hon. gentleman to accept that. He says, in throwing doubt on my word, that two hon. members have seen this film.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I said one.