

the gentleman was acting and purporting to act as chairman of the committee, an entirely different case from the present. I have not thought—nor would I think—of expressing the views of the committee, or of making a report that purported to be the report of the committee, or of the chairman or of a member of the committee, but, I repeat, I was only exercising my rights in putting into print arguments that no one could object to my making in support of the measure of which I was in charge. What I have done I have done with perfect frankness. I have not endeavoured to lobby for the Bill, or to buttonhole members, or to use one argument to appeal to one and another argument to appeal to another; but I have placed in print the argument in support of the views I hold and have circulated the same, presenting a copy to every member of the House in the most frank and honourable way. To those explanations I would add that I believe that those in charge of the 'Citizen', in their criticism, have been perfectly honest, and I believe that when they further reflect upon the article they have written, they will be exceedingly sorry for having written it.

Mr. MONK. I suppose this should be considered a question of privilege, and it is for that reason that I venture to address the House upon the subject, for I think it involves a very important question of custom and parliamentary regulation. I may tell my hon. friend (Mr. Miller) that he is a little mistaken in saying that by my letter to him this morning I called his attention to the article in the 'Citizen'. I think it was only after having despatched my letter to my hon. friend that the article was brought to my notice. What I wrote this morning was that, upon receipt of the pamphlet he had circulated, it had occurred to me that he had committed a very serious infraction of the privileges of the House, and that it would be our duty to call the attention of the House to it. I did not base my communication to my hon. friend on the article of the 'Citizen', but I deemed it necessary, in relation to this question which arose out of very little, to ask the House to lay down a rule with regard to such a proceeding as my hon. friend—quite sincerely and honestly—saw fit to adopt. Although one may not refer to the proceedings in the committee for the purpose of the decision of this question, I presume that it may be said that the Select Committee to which this Bill was referred had heard the evidence and had given the counsel concerned in the case one week to furnish written arguments in support of their contention. And it was, I think, Friday evening when the pamphlet of my hon. friend was circulated.

I was immediately struck by the thought which, I believe, must have struck everybody, that that method of proceeding was quite unusual and irregular. I may say that our proceedings in committee have been most harmonious, and my hon. friend (Mr. Miller) has discharged his duties as chairman very satisfactorily—I do not think any difficulty arose amongst the members of the committee. But the question we have to consider is: Does the circulation—by a member of parliament, by a member of the committee, or by the chairman of the committee indifferently—of a statement in favour of a Bill or any subject matter that has been referred to a select committee, constitute an irregularity which amounts to an infraction of the privileges of the House. I think it does. And I think that if we allow the door to be opened to that kind of procedure, if the House does not declare that such a proceeding is not to be allowed, it will give rise to very serious abuse.

Mr. MILLER. Does the hon. member (Mr. Monk) think there is any difference between presenting to him, a member of parliament, an argument in writing or in print and making the same argument to a member in conversation?

Mr. MONK. I think there is a very great difference, and I will tell my hon. friend why. There is no doubt that all the members of the House are familiar with the principle. Matters that are referred by the House for special investigation to a committee are supposed to be fully investigated, and the minds of members of the House left uninfluenced in any way until that committee has investigated the matter and made its report. And, indeed, we carry the principle so far that it is strictly forbidden even to refer in the House in any way to the proceedings or the subject matter before the committee, and it is, strictly speaking, a breach of the privileges of the House to even communicate what takes place before the committee. That rule is relaxed, I know, with regard to the public press, as is a similar rule of the House itself. But it is more especially adhered to in regard to matters referred to a committee than in regard to affairs discussed in the House itself. The House will perceive at once that if it were possible to allow a member of the committee who is cognizant of everything taking place before the committee to address appeals to members while the committee still has under consideration and advisement the matters which have been referred to it, and before it has reported, that proceeding would give rise to the greatest possible abuses. I did not know that my hon. friend intended bringing up the matter at the present stage, and I must reproach him for not having advised me,