

Question of Privilege

in order to clear his name, to make a statement along this line. And this is part of the intolerable situation which the minister has put the ex-members of that cabinet into by the statements which he has made. In view of this whole situation, Mr. Speaker, and in order that it may be cleared up definitely and that there may be an end put to the many rumours and speculations and what not which have run around the country as a result of this, I move this motion:

That the Minister of Justice be required forthwith to substantiate the charges made inside and outside this chamber which have reflected unfortunately and improperly upon members of Her Majesty's Privy Council, or alternatively that he be asked to submit his resignation and to atone by the forfeiture of his seat.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

An hon. Member: Don't be suspicious.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Woolliams: It is about time the Prime Minister opened the letter.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): He has not spoken with him.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As hon. members realize, the first and perhaps most important duty that the Chair has in a situation such as this one, is to determine whether there is actually a prima facie case of privilege. Perhaps hon. members might like to say a few words about this matter, that a decision might be rendered.

Hon. Lucien Cardin (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I want everyone in the house to know, and I am quite sincere in this, that I feel very badly about the way things are turning out.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cardin: And I can also appreciate the fact that the hon. member for Calgary North and other Privy Councillors may have been offended by what I am alleged to have said.

If hon. members in the house will recall what I said on Friday they will see that I made no reference to any hon. member in this house. What I asked was—

Mr. Winkler: That is not right.

Mr. Cardin:—that the Leader of the Opposition express to the committee his actions in this particular case. Period. I said no more than that, and it is the right hon. gentleman himself, the Leader of the Opposition, who at a political party gave more information on the Munsinger case than anybody else.

[Mr. Harkness.]

Mr. Churchill: You are attacking him in his absence again.

Mr. Cardin: The press itself amplified that far more than perhaps the Leader of the Opposition did or I did.

An hon. Member: Who spread the rumours?

Mr. Cardin: I did not at any time mention the details of the case, either to the press or to anyone else, except by confirming today what I already have confirmed in the house.

The hon. members in this house I think have a responsibility in this.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cardin: I suggested a moment ago that the only question before the committee is the conduct, or the decision of the Leader of the Opposition in this particular case when he was prime minister. That is the point.

Mr. Winkler: Who put the rumours in the press gallery?

Mr. Cardin: In having a judicial inquiry into the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition this problem could be solved. There are members of the Privy Council on this and on the opposite side of the house who in fact, I think, would like to have that conduct looked into.

• (3:20 p.m.)

I have suggested that this perhaps would be the best, the most honest, the most orderly and the most diplomatic way of solving this problem without there being any kind of aspersion cast on any hon. member.

Mr. Starr: You have already done that.

Mr. Cardin: The one thing that is in the minds of the people is to decide upon the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition when he was Prime Minister during the Munsinger case.

Mr. Lambert: What about this morning?

Mr. Harkness: The Minister of Justice has now made some further allegations and suggested a further course of action. But those allegations and that suggested course of action do not excuse him in any way for the slur which he has cast upon me and other former ministers of the Conservative government, and it is this matter which is before the house at the present time. Irrespective of what inquiry may be set up, or anything along that line, I think the minister has placed himself in a position that he must either substantiate the statements he has made or resign, as called for in the motion I have made.