

Reference to Statement by Prime Minister

sum total of our duty to this house, the duty of each member, no matter his station, to uphold the principle that enables each member of the house to refer with surety to each other member as an honourable gentleman. I refer to the remarks on page 12 of the transcript, for instance:

● (3:10 p.m.)

And then we came up against this income tax bill on a Monday night by, according to this Conservative member, a plot engineered.

I refer also to the remarks on page 14:

"Are you going to let these people manoeuvre you by this kind of trickery into a general election at this particular time?"—

Also the remarks on page 22:

That's the way elections should be brought about. Not by this kind of trickery situation last Monday night.

These are three quotations from the Prime Minister's speech, and each one seeks to indicate that there was something improper about the proceedings in this house last Monday. The proceedings of this house are recorded in *Hansard* and *Votes and Proceedings*, and the situation that was developing all day is plainly to be read. That day's procedure was exactly the same as the procedure that has been carried on in this house for many, many years by many governments, and that is the way in which bills have been voted on, sustained or defeated.

Unquestionably, in the words of the Secretary of State for External Affairs for example, the duty of the opposition is to criticize. Those who now sit opposite me have been heard to say in the past that it is the business of the opposition to defeat the government.

An hon. Member: At all costs.

Mr. Nugent: Surely anyone in this country who considers the impudence of this government will think it the duty of the opposition to get rid of this government. Since the allegation has been made that trickery was involved in the long accepted, standard and honourable procedure of this house, a procedure which clearly says that the duty of the opposition is to oppose, criticize and, if possible, get rid of an incompetent government—there need be little argument to show that the allegation touches on the privileges of members of the house.

If a course of conduct which we deem to be in the best interests of our party and this

[Mr. Nugent.]

country is undertaken, and if we who honourably pursue our duty in this house are to be smeared with the label of "trickery", then surely the rule having to do with reflections being cast on hon. members of the house ought to be invoked. I ask Your Honour to allow us to debate the matter, to determine the extent of the insult that hon. members have sustained because of those uncalled for words on the part of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I wonder if much is to be served by having repetitions of the argument which was so well put originally by the hon. member for Kamloops. On the other hand, I do not want any suggestion that hon. members have not had an opportunity to support the point of view that there has been a breach of privilege. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief. I do not think much needs to be said on the point. Unquestionably the Prime Minister of this country suggested to the public at large that trickery was involved in Monday night's vote. It has been clearly demonstrated in this house that there was no such trickery. The only way the Prime Minister has supported his position is by quoting from a newspaper which attributed some remarks to one member or several members of the house. The Prime Minister was not quoting any hon. member, in fact, he was quoting something that had been decided by a newspaperman.

The Prime Minister has not seriously attempted to deny that he made the offending remark. He has not seriously attempted to justify himself for what he said. To have made the remark on the spur of the moment, as he said my hon. colleague had done, is one thing. But this was a deliberate statement. It was repeated on a number of occasions, and it reflected on the members of this house in a completely unjustified manner.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: Clearly the remarks cast a reflection on this house and constitute a breach of privilege. I may say that I was very sorry to hear my right hon. friend make those remarks.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to detain the house for any great length since you have heard many expressions of opinion about this