

House of Commons

whatever the circumstances were, they have now been given widespread publication in the press.

Mr. Speaker: Would the Leader of the Opposition allow me to indicate that there is a distinction with respect to the word "deliberately"?

Mr. Drew: I did not use the word "deliberately".

Mr. Speaker: No, but the Leader of the Opposition said that if any member of the house were to say of another member that he falsifies or distorts facts for his own political ends that would be an unparliamentary expression and I would ask that it be withdrawn. I had a case the other day when the hon. member for Kootenay East said that the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr attempted to distort the facts, and in correcting him I said that the hon. member for Kootenay East should withdraw the expression because he was not allowed to insinuate or impute that the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr had made a deliberate attempt to distort the facts. That is the only distinction.

Mr. Drew: I repeat my statement that if these words were spoken in the house a retraction should be demanded. They are words that are not regarded as being a parliamentary expression because the motives of members must not be challenged. That is fundamental to the debates in this house. The Speaker has said that he is sorry the document was published. So are we. But it has been published and unfortunately it is now before the people of Canada that the Speaker, whose role it is to maintain dignity in debate in the house, has used words in relation to what has been said by many hon. members in this house which should not be permitted in orderly debate at any time. It removes from the Speaker any possible suggestion of impartiality.

I point out that the Speaker had a right to speak in two ways. When he suggested the motion of censure he indicated that this would give him an opportunity to speak. No one challenged that right. However, there is another way in which the Speaker is perfectly free to speak, and that is to resign and as a private member express his opinion outside of the house within bounds of decency imposed by himself in any way he sees fit, or to express his opinion in this house under the rules that have been established and which it is his high duty to administer. He is merely the temporary occupant of a chair which is symbolic of the relationship between government and opposition.

[Mr. Drew.]

Whatever the unhappy circumstances were which resulted in the publication of this communication, the hon. members who disagreed with the procedure which took place have now been told that in the Speaker's opinion they distorted or falsified facts for their political ends. How is it possible for any hon. member to divest himself of that knowledge and to start afresh with any pretence that there is impartiality in the mind of the Speaker? No matter by what process these words became public, the Speaker disclosed what was in his mind. That we now know. For that reason this house can no longer proceed with its deliberations in the manner that it should with a recognition by many of the hon. members that that is the opinion of the Speaker to whose impartiality they must appeal over and over again during the course of debates.

Mr. Speaker, I ask anyone to go back to the *Hansard* record of what was said during the discussion of the motion that was before the house. It is impossible to find at any point any statements that were made which were not made with full recognition of the solemnity of the occasion and with due regard for the position which the Speaker had occupied until those tragic events occurred. Nowhere in the statements that were made in support of that motion is there a single statement that justifies the implication contained in the words that have now been published.

The Speaker says he is sorry that they were published. They have been published; they are in our knowledge and therefore I submit that for the sake of the people of Canada, whose servants we are, for the sake of the dignity of this House of Commons that is an integral part of our great parliament with its rich traditions, I submit that the responsibility rests now entirely with the government. I ask the government in all earnestness to meet this situation in the only way it can. It is for the government to decide how long we must continue to do the business which is necessary for the passing of the moneys required for the business of the country. We should now have the assurance that when that is done there will be immediate dissolution brought about by the constitutional procedure available to the government and that the people of Canada, with the full knowledge of the facts, then will have an opportunity to elect a new parliament in harmony with the traditions and sentiments of our people.

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the house has listened to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) and the leader of the C.C.F.