

Supply—Justice

Mr. Bigg: That is what he said.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Nielsen: Is the Minister of Transport making the same charge?

Mr. Pickersgill: No, no; not at all.

Mr. Bigg: No, you don't want to risk your seat.

Mr. Nielsen: The President of the Privy Council replaced the qualified withdrawal of the word "lie" with the statement that on two occasions I did not tell the truth under oath before the Dorion inquiry. Under our rules that charge, must be unequivocally, completely, absolutely withdrawn.

The Deputy Chairman: Order.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): The rules are clear.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The Chair has certain difficulties just now in rendering a decision. If hon. members with their experience of procedure would enlighten the Chair in a more elaborate and thorough manner, then the Chair with the enlightenment of the house from all sides will be able to render a decision.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, I will endeavour to help you if I can. We have had many instances in the house where people have accused members of being untruthful. Sometimes they have used the word "lie". Sometimes they have said, "He did not tell the truth". It is the same expression. On each occasion in all the sessions I have been in this chamber the Chairman, or the Speaker, insisted that the member who made the statement accusing another hon. member of not telling the truth or of lying, should withdraw it immediately.

That has been the practice of the house. The rules substantiate it and everyone here, unless he is a new member, is aware that this is the situation. There is no lengthy argument required. The statement of the President of the Privy Council happens to be the worst I have heard during the 15 years I have been here.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Chairman, since this is my question of privilege—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The Minister of Transport.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I have had a certain amount of experience in the house, as has the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, and I do think it is quite correct, as he has said, that anyone who is accused—

[Mr. Nielsen.]

Mr. Bigg: Of perjury.

Mr. Pickersgill: In the first place the word "lie" is unparliamentary.

Mr. Favreau: I never said "perjury".

Mr. Bigg: I did.

Mr. Pickersgill: The statement that someone deliberately did not tell the truth has also been ruled unparliamentary, but I listened very carefully to what the President of the Privy Council said. I do not use one of these machines. I am relying on what knowledge I have of the other official language when I translate into English what I understood him to say. I understood him to say that on two occasions the hon. member for Yukon, when he was under oath before the Dorion commission, had made statements which were not true. I do not think, sir, there is any necessary implication in that statement if I have translated it correctly. There is no implication that the hon. member knew his statements were untrue.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Perjury requires knowledge.

Mr. Pickersgill: I submit, sir, there have been many occasions in the house where an hon. member, including the right hon. gentleman opposite, has said that something that someone else has said was not true—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Was false.

Mr. Pickersgill:—and that was not unparliamentary at all, unless there is some suggestion that there was deliberate knowledge when the statement was made that it was untrue.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Chairman, before other hon. members deal with the rules may I for one moment lay before the Chair and the members of the committee the precise question at issue here. The minister had before him, as he said, the transcript of what the translator referred to as the proceedings before Mr. Justice Dorion. He went on to say that that transcript indicated I had made statements under oath on two occasions which were not the truth. As I understand the law, sir, that is a direct charge of perjury.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Absolutely.

Mr. Nielsen: That is what must be withdrawn, the whole of the minister's statement, because inherent in it is a charge of perjury and it cannot be accepted as a parliamentary statement by any member of the house, let alone a responsible minister of the Crown