

Question of Privilege

those charges are. If he does not do that, sir, then he is under an obligation by our procedures to resign. That is the position in which he is.

Public life would be impossible, if a minister in full possession of his ministerial authority were able to make this kind of a charge about members of this house past and present, about privy councillors and about a former Prime Minister of this country without being required to substantiate and prove them. He must name names, and he must reveal the full circumstances. No more serious charges have been made by a minister in this country.

According to the press and the radio, the minister has involved, without naming them, members of the previous government, the Leader of the Opposition, privy councillors, and I think a woman whom he says was formerly involved in espionage in East Germany. He has stated there was a report on the matter on the files of the R.C.M.P., although he has not seen that report. He has stated that the case was a bona fide security case, although he has not said it very well. He has made the charge that the former Prime Minister did not deal in a proper manner with that case. How does he know, if he has not seen the file?

He has made these charges after his estimates were passed and at a time when he knew the former Prime Minister was absent from this city. The minister's conduct constitutes a deplorable dereliction of his high office and a dastardly attack on the former Prime Minister, a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council, and every member of the former Conservative government, some of whom are still sitting in this house and who are Privy Councillors.

I submit, to you, sir, and to the house, that this must be dealt with by parliament and must be dealt with by parliament immediately, because the shabby, sordid and underhanded action which it constitutes is one which must not be allowed to be interrupted by any other order of business. The minister now must back up in this house what he said to the press outside this house, and back up in this house the charges he made against the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon.

The Prime Minister of this country is not free from responsibility. A public action of this kind by a member of the cabinet must represent the considered determination of the government. The Prime Minister and the

[Mr. Nielsen.]

government must accept the minister's action or repudiate it. The minister acted following a meeting of the cabinet.

The whole government is involved in a course which has been reprehensible. It is a course of action which has been cowardly, and it is a course of action which has been lacking in the most elementary sense of justice or responsibility. I hear members over there make remarks concerning past proceedings of this house with regard to myself when I brought certain charges.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Nielsen: This is a question of privilege and surely it supersedes—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may raise his point of order.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, no remarks whatever were being made from this side of the house.

An hon. Member: You just came in.

Mr. McIlraith: The hon. member is stating something about the proceedings in the house at the moment which is not true. There was no sound of interruption whatever.

An hon. Member: You were only coming in.

Mr. Nielsen: If an ordinary member of parliament had made such charges as were made by the minister this afternoon, and outside of this house, he would be required to substantiate them, and I am one who has particular knowledge. I see the Parliamentary Secretary laughing. He would be required to substantiate them. A minister's responsibility certainly is that much greater, and that responsibility does not cease once he leaves this chamber and holds a press conference. He has been meeting with the press and he has been giving out information in dribs and drabs, even prior to the allegations he made this morning.

The *Globe and Mail* this morning carries an interview with the minister in which he says "the Munsinger case is worse than the Profumo case". This statement is in the papers this evening in Ottawa.

● (7:20 p.m.)

In what way is it worse? Profumo lied to parliament. Does the minister say that someone here lied to parliament? Does he say the former prime minister lied to parliament or that any Privy Councillor lied to parliament?