

informed the gentleman that I was under the impression that it was a closed discussion and I did not feel that I could give him any information. He then went on to inform me that a press report had gone out from this meeting.

I would like to know if that was in order?

I might say, that before coming in, I went to see Dr. Beauchesne and asked him if it was in order for members to give press reports of a meeting held in camera. Dr. Beauchesne informed me it definitely was not in order.

I would like to know the idea behind the press report going out from a meeting, which to most of us, was in camera.

I might add that I have no objection to the reports, on my own behalf, but I do object to meetings being termed in camera and then reports being made. If that kind of thing is done it is obviously impossible, in the House of Commons, to hold meetings in camera, and it might possibly be that information of a much more serious nature than that discussed this morning could be disclosed to the great danger of the country as a whole.

Mr. MAYBANK: I think I can cast some light upon the matter of complaint.

It should not be thought—or at least I do not think it should be thought—that any member of the staff of the House of Commons gave out such a statement, although I believe that he would have been quite justified in doing so. The clerk has kept a record and that record is for the benefit of the public and will be printed in due course.

However, the facts respecting the giving out of information, as far as I know them, are as follows. The press came into this room immediately we had risen and they asked what had taken place. I think they were addressing the clerk or partly him, partly me, partly Mr. Mutch, and partly two or three other people.

I stated to the press, because I was the one who could give the information best at the time—the motion which I had made. I stated to the press, likewise, either the exact words or as nearly as I could the motion made by Mr. Nicholson. I told the press that the motion was put first—Mr. Nicholson's motion—had been defeated. I do not think I told the press, but rather somebody else told them, how various people voted in Mr. Nicholson's motion.

A little later I was asked if I could state how people voted on my motion and I said yes I could, and thereupon I did so.

That clears up the factual matter lying behind the report.

The next comment I would make with reference to Mr. Moore's question of privilege is that there is no question of privilege involved. A meeting in camera is not a secret meeting but it is a meeting held in that way for convenience. Had that idea been made perfectly clear in the beginning—that we desired to meet and discuss our positions in secret—there would have been objection lodged from several members immediately, and I would have been one of them. As far as I am concerned, when I meet in any meeting of that sort, any person who reports accurately facts respecting me is quite within his rights. Furthermore any person who reports accurately anything which is done is quite within his rights. There is no rule, either in Beauchesne or in any other place, which can impose secrecy upon the elected members of parliament with reference to the discharge of their duties, with but a very few exceptions. One outstanding exception is the secret session of the House of Commons when it is held in wartime. Another occasion is the secret session of committees such as the committee on Defence of Canada regulations. The distinction is drawn in those cases that the meetings are secret, necessarily so by reason of the things discussed.

The facts which I disclosed to the press, I had a perfect right to disclose. As I have said I informed them of the terms of my motion and that it was defeated six to five. I stated those who voted against it—I stated that Mr. Moore voted against it, that Mr. Nicholson voted against it, and I stated