

Question of Privilege

PRIVILEGE

MR. HARKNESS—MUNSINGER INVESTIGATION—ALLEGED INSINUATIONS AND ALLEGATIONS BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE—MOTION TO SUBSTANTIATE CHARGES

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the answer just given by the Minister of Justice I must rise on a question of personal privilege. My question of privilege concerns the matter just now under discussion, namely the insinuations and allegations made by the Minister of Justice in this house on Friday last in connection with the alleged Munsinger case, and the subsequent statements which he made at a press conference this morning to which reference has just been made.

The statements he made, as reported in the press this morning, are these, and I will instance only a few of them to indicate that a question of privilege exists. They are along the following lines:

Mr. Cardin said he understands the R.C.M.P. has a file on the case but that Mr. Diefenbaker never referred it to the law officers of the crown.

He himself had not seen the file but had learned a great deal about the case while he was in another department, presumably as Associate Defence Minister.

An hon. Member: Hearsay.

Mr. Harkness: Yes, it is hearsay.

Justice Minister Cardin charged today that two or more former cabinet ministers in the Diefenbaker cabinet were involved with a former east German spy.

In a Southam news report there occurs this statement:

• (3:10 p.m.)

Today, answering a barrage of questions on the Munsinger matter—it quite overshadowed his decision to resign his ministry, since withdrawn—Mr. Cardin asserted that though he had never examined the Munsinger file personally, he had heard of the case when he was associate minister of national defence.

In the front page of the *Ottawa Journal* which I have just secured, again it is stated, or reported to have been said by the minister:

—“the Munsinger scandal” involving “more than one member of the Diefenbaker Cabinet.”

And again he was asked:

—had there been an actual security leak?
“I don’t know—but there definitely was a security risk.”

He is again making allegations on this line.

The justice minister has yet to see the R.C.M.P. file.

Where then, did he hear of the Munsinger case, the initial word of which he exploded Friday in the Commons?

The answer is:

“At the Defence Department.”

At the time it came to his ears he was associate defence minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, all of these statements, allegations and insinuations made by the Minister of Justice have only and can have had only one effect, and that is to put every person who was a member of the Conservative cabinet of that period, which I understand is supposed to be the 1960 to 1962 period, under suspicion.

This is an extremely unfortunate situation for me and for every other person who was a member of that cabinet to find himself in, and I think there is no question whatever but that the statements the minister has made cannot be allowed to hang in the air and rumours, speculations and stories of all kinds to be circulated against all of the hon. members of the Privy Council who were members of that government. It is an intolerable situation and it is a particularly bad situation, I consider, from my own point of view, because the minister has now inferentially, or pretty directly pointed the finger really at the Department of Defence, because he said that it was from there that he secured the information.

An hon. Member: Well now—

Mr. Harkness: There is nothing to laugh at in this whole situation, Mr. Speaker. It is an extremely serious one, and one which I, and I know every other cabinet minister upon whom suspicion has been cast, feel extremely strongly.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, the minister having made these statements, as I say, the question cannot remain at that point. I wish to say, and I state very categorically, that until the minister mentioned this matter in the house on Friday last, I had never heard the word “Munsinger” or the name “Munsinger”. I had never heard anything whatever in connection with that alleged case, and I am prepared not only to state that here, but to state it under oath in any inquiry of anything else which may be held in connection with the matter.

Now, I do not think that we can have the—we will say the undignified spectacle of every minister who was a member of that cabinet rising and being required, or having,