

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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**Monday, October 17, 1966**

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. NUGENT—OBJECTION TO STATEMENTS BY DEFENCE MINISTER

**Mr. Terence Nugent (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege arising out of statements made by the Minister of National Defence as reported in the *Ottawa Journal* of Saturday, October 15 under the by-line of Victor J. Mackie, the words giving rise to such question of privilege being the following:

"It is apparent that he has had second thoughts and is now engaged in the complete 'back-off' which substantiates my contention that the charge was 'spurious' designed to damage my reputation rather than to get at the facts."

Those are Mr. Hellyer's words. The minister was speaking about me and his statement clearly imputes an improper motive. His words are so strong as to impugn my very honour and integrity.

Mr. Speaker, as all hon. members know, the facts of the case are that I made a very serious charge against the minister, that I made it in this house in the only manner in which it could be made—that is by rising in my place and taking full responsibility for my words—and having done that, the charge is now complete and stands against the minister as it stood when I made it. Having made the charge, I could have merely sat down at that point, but naturally when very serious matters are at stake we try to assist the house in finding a way in which the matter can be dealt with.

The reason for not going further was simply the procedural difficulties which I have been unable to overcome. I would remind the house that on Wednesday, October 12 these difficulties were almost overcome but the minister, who as an honest gentleman should have been looking for a way to have the matter investigated so that his name could be cleared, was the only member in the house to refuse unanimous consent which would have made it possible for this matter to be investigated.

Then on Thursday, October 13 the minister, having barred further consideration of this matter, made some statements against me which caused me to rise on a question of privilege suggesting that he was attacking my motives. Your Honour will remember that when you dealt with this matter on Thursday the minister got up and made a statement which in my opinion did not clear the minister of imputing motives; but Your Honour, on considering the matter, said the following:

My limited experience in the house indicates that it is not per se, unparliamentary to say of another member that the statement he makes is false, untrue, wrong, incorrect or even spurious, unless there is an improper motive imputed—

Further on you said:

The minister has taken the opportunity to do what I would have asked him to do in any event, to say that he did not impute motives.

Mr. Speaker, I contend that it is no longer open to the minister to suggest that he was not imputing motives. He made the statement to the press expressly for the purpose of imputing motives.

The manner in which he made that statement makes it quite obvious that he was imputing motives.

I would ask Your Honour to rely on the statement with which you ended your ruling that I did not have a prima facie case of privilege, which appears at the top of page 8599 of *Hansard*:

I realize that in some instances words may be used which are so strong as to impugn the very honour and integrity of the individual member against whom the words are directed.

Now, sir, in the circumstances you did not feel that was the case; but I submit to you, sir, that your ruling cannot apply now since the minister has suggested that the charge is not well founded, that I am responsible for not proceeding with it, and am backing down. He has gone even further and said that I am proceeding with the case only to embarrass him.

In view of your remarks on Thursday indicating that the only difference between Your Honour and myself as to a proper case of privilege so the house might consider the very serious matters I raised was based on the minister's statement at that time. I ask Your Honour to rule that I now do have a prima facie case in this matter.