

Mr. Drew: I would point out that Lord Bennett had not only sat in this house as prime minister of Canada, but had held other positions, and continued to serve in many capacities until the time of his death in 1947.

Senator McRae was a member of the other house of parliament until 1946 when he also died. This is an extremely late occasion to be making allegations of this kind. There is, however, something more that should be remembered when allegations of this kind are made. Only within the past few days we were told how important it was in these difficult days, when our democratic system is under challenge, that respect for our institutions be preserved by everything we do. The present Prime Minister, who was here then, used that argument in dealing with certain matters then before the house. He pointed out how careful we should be to do nothing that would reflect upon the members of the house, the dignity of the institution of parliament or the manner in which the affairs of either house of parliament might be conducted.

This is a statement that two men, sitting as members of parliament, one in each house and both in this parliament at the time, played upon the public feelings, created fear by speaking of unemployment and, in doing so, affected the stock market for their own personal advantage. There was a place where statements of that kind were made in the lifetime of those two gentlemen who are no longer with us. They were made by the communists in 1930. The communists made those statements reflecting on the integrity of the man who was leader of the opposition and then prime minister of Canada. They made those statements about Senator McRae. They are not expected to have any regard for the truth. Above all, they were not sitting as members of this house, with some direct sense of responsibility for what takes place in this house.

I have already expressed my regret that when the hon. member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot)—with whom I have had such cordial relations and whose genial personality sometimes excuses his irrelevancies—rose on a question of privilege at the beginning of the sitting this afternoon, he did not ask to have these offensive remarks expunged from the record but instead of that, on a question of privilege, sought to justify these untrue and improper remarks.

This statement was made yesterday in the House of Commons with regard to a man who was a former prime minister of Canada. Here in this house we have recently been emphasizing our own respect for our traditions and for the office of prime minister.

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

I ask the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Howe) here now to show some measure of consistency with regard to what was said so short a time ago and to dissociate himself and the government from these improper, offensive and disgraceful remarks that now stand on the record.

Mr. Fulton: And they are untrue.

Mr. Drew: They are untrue. They are an offence to parliament. They are an offence to the memory of two great men. Whatever difference of opinion there may be with regard to the political views of the man who was then prime minister of this country during extremely difficult years, let us make it perfectly clear that he did not create the depression. Even if anyone must stray so far from the facts as to make statements of this kind, let him at least keep the surrounding facts in some sort of proportion. The charge is not only improper. It is fantastically ridiculous. Just imagine, Mr. Speaker, the full implications of the unintentional tribute that has been paid by the member for Temiscouata to the man who was prime minister of Canada. According to the member for Temiscouata, so great was the impact of his words that, the moment he spoke, the stock exchange of New York responded to the effect of what he said, apparently long before he said it. No, Mr. Speaker, it was not in 1930 that the depression came. When the member for Temiscouata today rises and tries to leave the impression that there was even some colour of accuracy to the remarks he made, and when we are reminded that this suggestion is being made once again that Mr. Bennett brought on the depression, may I quote a man who has not usually been regarded as an extreme Tory. I refer to Mr. Bruce Hutchison. I am quoting from page 149 of "The Incredible Canadian". I might say it is under the heading "A Spell of Blindness". I quote from page 149:

King maintained his former policies and floated with the golden tide. He was deceived by the general deception. It is perhaps the most incredible fact of his life that he accepted the mythology of the great boom. The student of history and economics, the rebel against capitalism, the Liberal heretic who had long foreseen where his law of competing standards would lead went temporarily blind. The Conservative prediction of disaster had proved so absurd, the "whispers of death" had been so drowned in the rattle of the tickers that, for the moment, King seemed to imagine that the good society of his dream already was coming to life . . .

Mr. Rowe: They are following the same blindness today.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker, since these inaccurate statements are made may I remind you that the words I have quoted are the