

Morality in Government

hon. members in the course of debate should not quote or refer specifically to the proceedings or evidence. I do not think I have any authority to change that ruling. I believe hon. members should abide by this precedent which certainly is part of the rules of the house.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I can have no complaint about any ruling you make because you always try to be fair. However, that does not deny me the right to say that the reason the government do not want this evidence disclosed is that they are afraid.

• (5:10 p.m.)

This afternoon the Prime Minister decided to contradict the commissioner of the R.C.M.P. He did that for his own purposes. He now wants to deny this house its right to know what the commissioner said. I will paraphrase, sir, as you suggest. I am now paraphrasing from the report in the Canadian Press: "I was asked if I had any information on my files of a nature which indicated impropriety or wrongdoing on the part of any member of the government—the present government. I then asked, if I answered that"—the commissioner did not say at that time what his answer was.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. Leader of the Opposition indicated that he wanted to abide by the ruling of the Chair in that he would paraphrase the evidence, as I suggested. I have the impression that he is perhaps quoting it a little too closely. It is difficult for me to judge when I have not read the evidence. I do not know whether the right hon. Leader of the Opposition is paraphrasing or quoting from the evidence, but I take it that he is abiding by the Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Diefenbaker: You know, I never was very good in grammar and when it comes to paraphrases I have difficulty. I will proceed to say that the commissioner did not say at that point what his answer was, but he was then asked if he had any information indicating any impropriety or anything of a scandalous nature involving any hon. member of any party over the last ten years.

An hon. Member: Scandal.

Mr. Diefenbaker: He was, of course, aware of the matters that were being discussed in the house and that they were the subject of gossip. In answer to a direct question of the Prime Minister he spoke in the affirmative.

[Mr. Speaker.]

He then referred to the Munsinger file, at which time the Prime Minister indicated that he thought he had better see it. That in general is a summary by way of paraphrase of the report in the Canadian Press on April 29, which I point out, sir, is in complete contradiction of the revised version placed before this house by the Prime Minister for his own purposes.

I now paraphrase the evidence that actually was given. I will paraphrase the page from which I cannot quote. It is page 331. A question was asked by Mr. Carson about what had happened on December 1 and December 2, 1964, with reference to a matter coming to the attention of the Prime Minister and the President of the Privy Council. He asked the commissioner if he had any indication of how the matter had come to the knowledge of the Prime Minister, to which the commissioner replied in the affirmative. He was then asked, and I paraphrase, as to the nature of this, and the commissioner went on to say in answer that from the questions that were asked he could give information.

Then he proceeded with his evidence, at which time Mr. O'Brien, counsel for the commission, thought that possibly Commissioner McClellan was disturbed that he might be disclosing something he should not disclose. Commissioner McClellan indicated that that conclusion by Mr. O'Brien was indeed correct at which time Mr. O'Brien stated, and I again paraphrase, that when he had first seen the commissioner he was in a position of some discomfort. The attitude of Mr. O'Brien was that he could see no reason why what took place between the Prime Minister and the commissioner of police should not be disclosed.

The commissioner then gave his evidence, which I paraphrase. The commissioner was called to the Prime Minister's office with the President of the Privy Council. He believed that Mr. Gordon Robertson, secretary of the Privy Council, was present. The commissioner was then asked by the Prime Minister if he had any information indicating that there had been any impropriety—and I do not know how to paraphrase this—anything of a scandalous nature involving any member of parliament in any party over a period of what he thought was ten years. That generally, I think, was the expression used. It must have been the expression used because the Prime Minister himself referred to ten years. He said that an examination had been made over a period of ten years.