

are the very same words as were uttered by the hon. member for Assiniboia and which you ruled out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER. I did not hear how the hon. gentleman made out that the hon. member for Saskatchewan had resigned his position.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mulock). He said he was not a member.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. Postmaster General is mistaken. I did not say he was not a member, but I said that he had taken his seat without challenging the accuracy of the statement made upon affidavit by respectable persons who had seen the document signed by that hon. gentleman, by which he surrendered his right to sit in this House as the representative of the constituency, and remitted to a commission the discharge of those duties which the constituency elected the hon. gentleman to perform. I say that that is one of the gravest charges that can be made, and if the hon. gentleman thought fit to take his seat without challenging its accuracy, he must be held in the estimation of every hon. gentleman in this House as having surrendered his right to a seat in it. I draw attention to this, as a matter of grave significance, that the hon. gentleman who leads this House should have permitted a statement of this kind to obtain currency and credence for a single moment without disclaiming all lot and part in any such transaction, either on behalf of himself or any member of his Government. The hon. First Minister owes it to the House, to himself, and to the great party he represents in this country, to take the earliest opportunity of removing any such imputation made against him, not merely by newspaper report but sworn to in the most solemn manner.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier). I do not know what are the feelings of the hon. gentleman in these matters, but so far as I am concerned, I tell him frankly and within the hearing of everybody in this House that I am too long in political life to take any stock in newspaper reports, and I will not be driven from any position I take in this House by anything stated in the newspapers. Whenever an hon. gentleman chooses to attack my position or the position of those who support the Government, upon his honour and responsibility, then every attention will be given to the charges made. With regard to the statements made by the hon. member from West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin), I take no stock in them, for this very good reason. On the face of them, and as I well know, they are false. He stated that a gentleman in the civil service had gone as an emissary of mine to Prince Albert in order to induce Mr. Newlands, who was a possible candidate for the Saskatchewan district, to withdraw in favour of Mr. Davis.

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Mr. DAVIN. What I said was that he went to get Mr. Davis to withdraw in the interests of Mr. Newlands.

The PRIME MINISTER. It does not matter much which way you put it. The hon. gentleman said that this high official was sent in order to get Mr. Davis to be accepted in place of Mr. Newlands, or, in other words, that Mr. Newlands should withdraw, and that the price which should be given him for withdrawing was that he was to be put in the place of Mr. Barker, the registrar, who was to be superannuated. Sir, Mr. Newlands, for reasons of his own, did not run, and Mr. Davis was accepted and ran and got elected. Mr. Barker has not yet been superannuated but is still registrar, and Mr. Newlands is still as he was before. That disposes, therefore, of the imputation that Mr. Newlands had withdrawn for a consideration. The hon. gentleman later said that there had been a compromise or agreement between Mr. Davis, Mr. McPhail and the Government, and that Mr. McPhail and Mr. Davis had come to Ottawa and had seen me in the month of April. I state here, on my honour as a member of this House, that I never saw Mr. McPhail in Ottawa, that I have not seen him since 1894 when I was in Prince Albert. This shows what credence is to be given newspaper reports. The House of Commons could not carry on its business if newspaper reports were to be accepted. The most nonsensical reports and rumours are published in the papers. There are some published to-day, and there are always people found gullible enough to swallow them.

Mr. CASEY. The hon. leader of the Opposition grows extremely virtuous and indignant in Opposition, but when he was a subordinate member of the Government, he did not feel quite so strict on some of those points. It appears, after all, that his charge that the hon. member for Saskatchewan is not the member for Saskatchewan rests on an assertion which even the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) does not undertake to endorse personally, namely, that the hon. member for Saskatchewan exercises his patronage through a committee of his supporters in his riding. I am not discussing the truth or falsity of the statement—but what does it amount to, if true? The loud-voiced gentleman who leads the Opposition states in his most pompous tones that such conduct on the part of an hon. member is tantamount to a surrender of his position as a member of this House—that no man who exercises patronage through a committee of his supporters is worthy to be called a representative. I would like to ask hon. gentlemen opposite how many of them, when they had the disposal of patronage, did ask a local committee to advise them on such questions?

Mr. HUGHES. I venture to say that no hon. gentleman on this side ever signed a document giving up his rights.