

*Privilege—Mr. Mackenzie King*

Mr. McKENZIE (Assiniboia): I was here Saturday night and I did not hear the item called.

Mr. BENNETT: It passed the committee.

Mr. WEIR (Melfort): This item was included in the old item and we thought it would be better to separate it.

Mr. McINTOSH: How much was the old grant?

Mr. WEIR (Melfort): I could not say off-hand.

Resolutions reported, read the second time and concurred in.

## PRIVILEGE—MR. MACKENZIE KING

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Before we proceed further, Mr. Speaker, there is a matter of personal privilege to which I wish to speak.

Mr. BENNETT: Would my right hon. friend rather speak now or at a later stage?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I would rather take up the matter now, because this is the first opportunity I have had with the Speaker in the chair, and I feel that the matter is important. I have in my hand a copy of the Toronto Mail and Empire of Saturday, August 1, which carries the following headline across the front page:

Bennett Says King Told Senator Haydon: "Get The Money."

A little further down the page there is a subheading, "Go and get money", under which appears the following:

Thrusting an accusing, quivering forefinger directly at Mr. King, Mr. Bennett declared in searing phrases that the former premier had said to his friend, Senator Haydon, "Go and get money"—and that Senator Haydon had promptly gone and got it from Beauharnois. . . .

The moment I saw this paper, Mr. Speaker, I read through the speech made by the Prime Minister of which the article purports to be a reproduction and from which it is to be assumed the headings have been drawn. May I say that I could see nothing in the speech made by the Prime Minister, from beginning to close, nor have I seen or heard in any speech made by the right hon. gentleman at any time in this house any statement which justifies the heading appearing there or the statement I have read. The Prime Minister is in this House of Commons in front of me at the moment, and I should like him to say whether he ever made any such statement. I know very well that my right hon. friend

[Mr. Bennett.]

will not say he made a statement of the kind; I am perfectly sure he would be the last person to do so. For any paper to print such a heading or to make such a statement as one purporting to reproduce what was said in any debate which occurred in this House of Commons is to render itself open to an action for criminal libel.

Now I want to say that my right hon. friend, to use his own words on Friday last, did resort to the "cunning device, to insinuate hypothetical conditions and draw hypothetical conclusions, and then afford an opportunity for his political friends to go out into the country and quote them as indicating the true position."

Mr. BENNETT: This cannot be a question of privilege.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: So long as he held to insinuations and to innuendos I remained silent knowing that the records of this parliament would speak for themselves. Had there been a direct statement of the character here ascribed to the Prime Minister I most certainly would immediately have taken exception to it. I am making this statement at the moment, Mr. Speaker, first of all by way of protest and correction, and in the second place in order to say again emphatically that at no time since I have been leader of a political party have I given directions to anyone with respect to campaign funds. I am further making this statement from my place in parliament for the reason that it may become necessary for me, if this kind of thing is repeated by any individual or any newspaper in this country, to consider having regard to the source whether I shall not immediately institute an action for criminal libel. I do not wish the party who repeats an allegation of the kind to be able in mitigation or in self-defence to plead that, when I had opportunity in the House of Commons, I had not taken advantage of it first to correct what was false, and next to state to the house what was true.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): It is not usual, on questions of privilege, to avail oneself of the opportunity to make a speech; the Speaker has frequently ruled that this is improper. Nor is it usual to make threats against those who are not members of the house or those who are members. That is not regarded as a question of privilege. On a question of privilege it is the right of every member to deny the accuracy of reports that have been made with respect to what he has said in this house. The right hon. gentleman was perfectly within his rights in availing himself of the oppor-