

*Administration of Justice*

house, in a certain atmosphere, I would have preferred not to be called upon to take part in this debate. Unfortunately, a short while ago, the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton), former Minister of Justice, dragged my name into the debate in a way which compels me to set the record straight and clear up any doubt with regard to the circumstances under which the Munsinger file was mentioned in the house by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin).

I must say right away that, when the Minister of Justice challenged the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) to put on the record in detail the way he handled the Munsinger affair, the atmosphere in the house then was such that the minister did so under such provocation that, under the circumstances, it was not humanly possible for him to hold back.

And the Minister of Justice cannot be blamed for having done so in the circumstances.

I was surprised this morning, and shocked also, in view of the past relationship which existed between the former Minister of Justice and myself, in view of the memories I still have about the years I had the pleasure of working with him; I must say that I was shocked to read in a newspaper this morning that he had allegedly stated, in Vancouver I think, that in the course of a conversation I had with him, I had tried to blackmail him and members of the official opposition.

I must say at this point that this is not true and that I never threatened the former Minister of Justice to drop the name Munsinger in Parliament if the manoeuvring and discussions surrounding the Spencer case did not stop.

It is true, Mr. Speaker, and I am not afraid to say it—I think that it is all to my credit to have done so—it is true that I suggested to the hon. member for Kamloops that we should have a conversation about the Spencer case. It is true and it took place about two weeks ago, as he said in his statement.

On the other hand, the circumstances which led me to do that are not those he indicated and it is the first time, I think, that I hear the hon. member for Kamloops speak in a manner that is reminiscent of the one sometimes used by an hon. member opposite.

I said at the beginning of our conversation—and that is one of the reasons why I was shocked and surprised—that, excluding the Leader of the Opposition, whom I did not

want to see, he probably was the only member of the house with whom I could, as a member of the Privy Council—and I told him so very clearly, speak frankly.

He did not refuse to see me. In the circumstances, at no time did he ask that the discussion we were having be held any other way than under the seal of secrecy of the Privy Council.

This morning, I learned that he decided to betray the secret and make public, not the substance of our conversation, but the fact that we had had one. Substantially, my only comments were as follows, and here I shall say it in English:

[English]

"I want to see you to appeal to your sense of fairness and of justice."

[Translation]

I told him that himself, as former Minister of Justice, and the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Prime Minister of Canada, must have realized how difficult at times and fraught with responsibilities and consequences were the decisions a Minister of Justice and a Prime Minister had often to make about records involving the security of the state.

I reminded him that in the Spencer case, as in others, the good faith and the judgment of the Minister of Justice and the government had to be relied on with regard to the decisions called for.

I told him, it is true, to keep in mind that the Spencer case, in which the Leader of the Opposition seemed bent on destroying the Minister of Justice, was insignificant compared to other records with which himself and the former Prime Minister had to deal, among others, the Munsinger case. It is actually true. But there never was any question of revealing the record.

It is being suggested this afternoon that there was some kind of a plot or agreement between the present Minister of Justice and myself so that I should threaten the former Minister of Justice. I say once again that this is untrue.

I said that the opposition can attack the Minister of Justice by creating confusion as has often been done when we were held responsible for the St. Gilles murders, as it was almost done at a given time against the government.

But I said that to use a security case in an attempt to destroy a Minister of Justice was