

Reference to Statement by Prime Minister

has accused me personally of plotting. He referred to something which I am sure he has not read himself, personally, because I have not seen the article. However, quite gratuitously he is willing to accuse me of plotting, or the Conservative party of plotting, so I think I should have the right to explain the circumstances.

In the evening third reading was called by the Minister of Finance. At the time Mr. Deputy Speaker, acting on Your Honour's behalf, called for the yeas and nays and stated "The nays have it". As a result the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) immediately rose with his colleagues and asked for a vote. When that took place the Conservative party, not in association with any other political party in this house but by itself, organized to get every member who was in Ottawa in this house to vote. The result of that vote was a defeat of the government, something that my leader and every member of this party has been dedicated to do ever since this financial measure was brought down; and we did it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I thought it was in order to allow the hon. member some words of explanation in view of the fact that he had been brought personally into the discussion. As hon. members know, the duty of the Chair at this stage is to decide whether a prima facie case of privilege has been made out. I have no intention of stifling debate, however. If hon. members have something to contribute to convince me there is a prima facie case of privilege or there is not, I will listen, but I insist that any contribution be directly relevant to that particular point.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to point out to you and to the house that there is a prima facie case of privilege. I listened to television last night between 9.30 and ten o'clock and again at 11. I heard the Prime Minister talking to two members of the press gallery. I wrote down what he said, and if this is not correct the Prime Minister can make the necessary correction. I heard him say these words, and he was talking about bringing on an election: "Not by this kind of tricky situation on Monday night".

Now, sir, the burden of what he had to say in the press conference was that on Monday night when the vote was held on third reading of Bill No. C-193, some trickery took place. I was very careful to jot down these words. I said to myself, what did the Prime Minister mean by trickery on Monday night?

[Mr. Coates.]

This, sir, is a reflection on every member who was in the house on Monday night. There was no trickery. There was no deceit. The members who were here on Monday night were doing their duty to their country by being here.

● (3:00 p.m.)

We had participated in the debate in the afternoon and were prepared to continue after the supper hour, to complete the bill and go on with third reading, as is normal under the circumstances. There was not any deceitful action on the part of any member of the house to my knowledge; we were doing our duty. We were not staying away from the house. We were not holidaying.

If there was trickery, sir, it must have been on the part of those members of the Liberal party who were not here to cast their votes and support the government. Possibly that is where the trickery was. Perhaps that is what the Prime Minister was referring to. However, his remarks to the country indicated to the people of Canada that by some trick or some deceit the House of Commons had defeated a government motion. I, sir, as a member of this house find fault with that action and that statement of the Prime Minister. It is a reflection on each member who was here that night, and I will not stand for that type of reflection on my conduct as a member of the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Churchill: This statement was a reflection on the House of Commons as an institution, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister of this country, who is responsible for the conduct of the House of Commons, speaks to the nation and says there is trickery afoot in the House of Commons, that the government cannot get the business through because the House of Commons is deceitful and is using trickery to defeat their purpose. That is the impression the Prime Minister left with the people of this country, and that makes this a valid point of privilege.

As the hon. member for Kamloops has pointed out, Mr. Speaker, in casting a reflection on individual members and on the house as a whole the Prime Minister is also casting a reflection on the Speakership of this house. It so happened, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Deputy Speaker was in the chair on that occasion. If you will refer to page 6894 and the following pages of *Hansard* you will find that Mr. Deputy Speaker carried out the instructions of the house. He abided by the rules of the