

Question of Privilege

hear that explanation. I would especially like to hear him explain how so many members of this house, Privy Council members, can be put under a cloud. The minister tells us he has a file on the matter which he has not even seen. How can that be responsible government? I certainly hope some hon. members will take this opportunity.

Hon. R. A. Bell (Carleton): Mr. Speaker, a long time ago I learned never to speak at any length when I was full of indignation. Therefore, my words here tonight are going to be very few in speaking to this question of privilege.

There has been an unholy slander against a group of men who have served Her Majesty well in this country. The matter can be settled and it can be settled at once if the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Pearson) will act as a Prime Minister. I ask the right hon. gentleman for Algoma East to act as a Prime Minister.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Might I ask the hon. gentleman a question? What does he mean by "acting"? Does he mean recommending the establishment of a judicial inquiry into this matter?

Mr. Bell (Carleton): The right hon. gentleman knows perfectly well what I mean. I want him to bring his Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) into the house and make him prove the charges which he has made against a number of people, or else resign his seat. Let the right hon. gentleman act as a Prime Minister.

Mr. Pearson: Would my hon. friend be satisfied with having the Minister of Justice appear before a judicial inquiry, together with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) and all those concerned with this matter? Is that what he means by action?

• (7:50 p.m.)

Mr. Nielsen: The rules require the minister to make his choice.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Pearson: No, no—

Mr. Bell (Carleton): I have the floor. I say that this has gone beyond a judicial inquiry. This is something the high court of parliament must settle, and I say that right here. Let us go into committee of the whole and let us allow the Minister of Justice to present his evidence now.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Mr. Nugent.]

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Let him present the evidence in this house, and let us be the judges. We are the people who have been elected to be the judges of the situation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): I would, sir, move such a motion. Mr. Speaker, you have enough motions before you, but I will present to you what I think is the correct motion in this house, a motion that will show the moral indignation in this house, which should be felt by 265 hon. members. My motion is that the house do now resolve itself into committee of the whole in order that hon. members may have an opportunity to examine the Minister of Justice, so that he may advise the committee what evidence he has to substantiate the charges made inside and outside this chamber which have reflected unfortunately and improperly upon members of Her Majesty's Privy Council. In the event he fails to substantiate such charges then the hon. minister should be called upon to submit his resignation and to atone by the forfeiture of his seat.

An hon. Member: Right.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): That, sir, is the motion I am prepared to make in this house. I say to you, and I say to the right hon. gentleman from Algoma East, he has an obligation to do something to settle what has happened today.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): He has an obligation. Let him live up to the tradition of his office. He is the fourteenth man to hold that office, and he is about to be the first man to disgrace the office if he does not do anything.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, may I ask my hon. friend a question. If there is a recommendation made in this house for the establishment of a judicial committee, to inquire into all these matters which have been talked about, will he support it?

Mr. Bell (Carleton): I will support an investigation in this parliament tonight.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Bring the Minister of Justice in here. Bring in the man who has not even reviewed the file. Bring him in, and let him swear to it. Let him tell his story. He has so cowardly fled from the chamber. And what has he been ready to do? He has been ready to smear men of honour, men who have served the crown well.