

the honourable Member for Skeena puts it in a very positive way, been made public either by the government or some other source and that that in itself is a question of privilege that ought to be investigated.

There again I have very serious doubts. The honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre along with the honourable Member for Skeena suggests that in this way the operation of Parliament has been hampered—that honourable Members have been hampered in the discharge of their responsibilities as Members of Parliament in that information not yet given to the House has in some way found its way to the press or the public.

Does that constitute a question of privilege? The worst case that might be made by the honourable Member would be that there has been deliberate misinformation by the Minister. If this were so, then I suggest to honourable Members we might have a question of privilege if there was a substantive motion directed against the individual or directed against the Minister as a Member of the House. If there were a specific charge the matter might be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

That is not the subject-matter of the motion proposed now. The motion is simply that some inquiry be launched to investigate how this information leaked out—if it is a fact that information has actually been conveyed to members of the press.

I fail to see how this can be a question of privilege. There are a number of precedents indicating to honourable Members that this type of situation cannot be treated as a question of privilege. Honourable Members may remember that last year the honourable Member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) raised a question of privilege on the alleged advance publication of information relating to the Dorval airport. It was suggested by the honourable Member for Calgary North, and he was supported by a number of honourable Members, that this constituted a question of privilege and that the matter should be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections for investigation. Actually, this is precisely what the honourable Member wanted to do. He wanted the committee to ask questions, to interview witnesses and ascertain how this information had got into the hands of the public. This is what the honourable Member for Skeena would like done in connection with this particular alleged leak of information.

If honourable Members will consult the Journals of the House of Commons for Monday, March 31, 1969, they will see that the Chair at that time had painstakingly gone through many precedents and had studied the precedents in the British House and had come to the conclusion that this could not be the subject of a question of privilege.

I refer honourable Members to two cases which were particularly relevant. One was the Thomas case where a motion was made for an investigation under the Tribunals of Inquiry Evidence Act. After debate on that motion it was resolved on the main question “that the report be accepted” etc. The point which was relevant was that the matter was not considered at any time by way of a question of privilege.

Then in the Dalton case there was a suggestion that information had been leaked. The Honourable President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) smiles but he may not be thinking of the same Dalton. I am referring to the British Chancellor of the Exchequer of that time. The decision was the same, that the matter was not considered as a question of privilege. The conclusion was reached that the motion for study of the circumstances surrounding the