

*Privilege—Mr. Baldwin*

in the House of Commons can be found in *Hansard*. At page 600 of *Hansard* dated November 3, 1977, the Prime Minister is reported as saying:

—but I would suggest that the way to do it is not by hiring private detectives, as that party does—

He went on to say the following, and this is the matter Your Honour has to rule on:

—and not by having some phony bugs planted in their office, which is the way they do it.

That was a direct accusation against members of the Conservative party and, as the hon. member for Peace River has said, a direct breach of the privileges of this House. The Prime Minister has tried everything he can—going outside the House of Commons, gathering quotations from newspapers which he cannot find in the record of this House, coming back to parliament and trying to pretend that what he has done is something that other people have done. The fact is that there has not been a prime minister in the history of this country who has treated parliament with the same grimaces and disdain as this Prime Minister has done.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** To my knowledge of this place, certainly there has not been any prime minister who has stood in his place, as this Prime Minister has, made a direct accusation against another political party and then not had the courage or the courtesy either to bring forward proof or to withdraw the accusation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Alexander:** Notice how glum they look now.

**Mr. Clark:** The courtesies are well known. From time to time in the heat of debate, members may say something they do not intend, or they may say something which is extravagant. But most members, when they are caught in that type of extravagance, have the courtesy or the courage to come back to their colleagues in the House of Commons, if they respect this place, and withdraw the statement.

The Prime Minister has been given an opportunity to do that today, and he was given an opportunity to do it on the day the matter arose. Before the hon. member for Peace River raised the question of privilege, he was told that a question of privilege relating to his behaviour would be raised. Instead of staying to hear it, he went out, and what he said to me across the floor of the House was, "I can't stay here for the proceedings of parliament. I have a press conference to go to". So he turned his back on the House of Commons in order to go to a press conference.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark:** The courtesies are well known. Having made that accusation—

**Mr. Harquail:** Apologize to the RCMP.

**An hon. Member:** Say something.

[Mr. Clark.]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I would prefer the opportunity of trying to decide this question on what I hear from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Having made an accusation which is unlike any other accusation that he has been able to find—because if he had found one, he would have cited it—he did not have the courtesy to stand up and withdraw it. Because he knew it was an unfounded accusation when he made it, which was admitted later at the press conference to which he went, he did not have the ability to come here and lay evidence upon the table of the House of Commons.

The responsibility facing Your Honour at this stage is to decide whether there is a prima facie case of privilege here. If there is, the hon. member for Peace River will take the action which follows in that kind of case. I had no intention of getting involved in this debate.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark:** I rose because—

**Mr. Trudeau:** You should have followed your instincts.

**Mr. Alexander:** Notice how effective he is.

**Mr. Clark:** I rose because the Prime Minister of Canada stood in his place today, after four days of preparation in the Bahamas, and attempted deliberately to confuse the issue in an attempt to escape having to exercise toward the House of Commons the kind of courtesy which normal members of parliament and the people of Canada show toward this institution. That is why I wanted to rise. I think it is particularly important to note that the Prime Minister of Canada is prepared to make charges against a party in this House which he knows he cannot substantiate, then walks out of this chamber knowing the matter will be raised as a question of privilege.

Then, when given the opportunity honourably to withdraw his statements, he refuses honourably to withdraw those statements and instead establishes a smoke screen. When that kind of disrespect for the House is shown, I think the record has to be made very clear. The job is Your Honour's, and it is to decide whether, on the record, there is a clear accusation, without proof and without withdrawal, by the Prime Minister of Canada, and whether there is a prima facie case of privilege.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, had no intention of getting into this debate.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An hon. Member:** But television being what it is . . . !

**Mr. Broadbent:** I think the Prime Minister—

**Mr. Harquail:** Apologize to the RCMP.