

Administration of Justice

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I was dealing with the question of privilege before the house before the point of order intervened. I was dealing with the point that a commission of inquiry or the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections cannot possibly deal with this matter now in the absence of specific details which the minister is obliged to give the house. Otherwise any such inquiry must of necessity have before it all Privy Councillors, past and present, of the former administration, including the Leader of the Opposition, because of the sweeping charges that the minister has made.

An hon. Member: A few over there, too.

Mr. Nielsen: "More than two", he said at his press conference. Contrary to some opinions which have been expressed to Your Honour this afternoon, the Minister of Justice in the debate last Friday, as found on page 2211 of *Hansard*, used words that directly accused the Leader of the Opposition of participation—"participation" was the word he used—in the Munsinger case.

Sir, these slanderous remarks cannot be allowed to pass with impunity. The proposals of the Prime Minister, of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and of the Minister of Justice in his letter, a letter which I submit should be tabled immediately as our rules require, to the effect that the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition be investigated, cannot be allowed to be accepted by the house. The proposal by the Prime Minister in the house this afternoon, not being required to be substantiated in any way whatsoever by a specific charge by the minister, in lieu of withdrawal or resignation, cannot be allowed to be accepted by the house.

I submit, sir, that the words of Mr. Speaker Michener apply directly to the present situation and to the case of the Leader of the Opposition and make it immediately incumbent upon the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister here and now to make their specific and detailed charges. They must either do that or they must withdraw, or the minister must resign his seat in the house. There can be no departure in my submission from this principle. That is the essential and the only issue that is raised in the question of privilege before the house, and it can only be resolved—

● (12:40 p.m.)

Mr. Grégoire: Would the hon. member permit a question?

[Mr. Starr.]

Mr. Nielsen:—by this house.

Mr. Grégoire: I should like to ask the hon. member for Yukon why he did not resign after false insinuations were made against the hon. member for Matapédia-Matane (Mr. Tremblay)?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: Hon. members opposite applaud that question but if the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) had taken the trouble to recheck, as I did last night, he would have found that not on one but on three occasions on November 25 I said that I was not casting any reflection on the then minister of citizenship and immigration.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: Hon. members groan but that appears on the record on three separate occasions. The Minister of Transport has his *Hansard* there and can look it up. In my submission, Mr. Speaker, no inquiry can deal with the privileges of parliament. No outside body can take away from parliament the right to deal with its own privileges regardless of any terms of reference that may be set up.

What, sir, is the position of the Prime Minister? In what position has he placed himself? He has offered to set up a royal commission to investigate the actions of a former prime minister. Does he really expect the house to support that? I suggest not, sir. How many inquiries does the Prime Minister want in this field? When the Minister of Justice raised the matter the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr. Pickersgill: The Leader of the Opposition said he wanted one.

Mr. Nielsen: When the Minister of Justice very injudiciously and emotionally inserted the words "Monseigneur case" into the debate last Friday he drew this remark from the Leader of the Opposition, as reported at page 2211 of *Hansard*:

I am not worried. Have your commission look into it. Put it on the agenda.

No other member can suggest any other interpretation of those words uttered at that time than that the Leader of the Opposition meant that that case should be made the subject of the second inquiry which the Prime Minister announced on Monday.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the hon. gentleman allow me to ask him a question? How could the Leader of the Opposition on Friday have been referring to a royal commission which