

ought not to engage in their capacity as members of this honourable house. This is the charge which has been made. No other reasonable conclusion can be drawn. I therefore submit that this constitutes a prima facie breach of privilege.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I thank hon. members for the advice they have given the Chair. I might say that after listening to all the arguments I am perhaps a little more confused than I was at the beginning, and I was confused then.

I shall not deal with all the arguments which have been advanced by hon. members who have taken part in the debate. I think I should point out that I have allowed more latitude than usual on such occasions when normally, I think, the Speaker should rise as early as possible after the motion has been raised to rule whether or not there is a prima facie case of privilege. However, I felt this to be a matter of such importance that there ought to be no suggestion that all hon. members who wished to give advice to the Chair or explain their positions had not been given an opportunity to do so. Having taken this position, I think that to a large extent we have already had a debate such as we might expect to take place were the motion itself allowed and perhaps a debate such as would have taken place were the hon. member's motion, of which notice has been given to the house, proceeded with later in this current session.

What we have before us in the motion of which the hon. member for Kamloops has given notice is a suggestion that the use of certain specified words and expressions by an hon. member, in this case the Prime Minister, is in breach of the privileges of the house. I think I have to say, in spite of what the hon. member for Peace River and others have said as to the need to look at the complete record, that I am not in complete agreement with them. Certainly there is a specific motion before the house which claims that certain particular words are objectionable. These are the words which I think should be examined by the Chair and upon which a determination should be made.

The claim made by the hon. member for Kamloops is that there is a breach of privilege in the use of the word "trickery" as contained in the statement:

That's the way elections should be brought about. Not by this kind of trickery situation last Monday night.

Reference to Statement by Prime Minister

Are you going to let these people manoeuvre you by this kind of trickery into a general election at this particular time?

Those are the words.

Mr. Fulton: May I direct Your Honour's attention to the fact that the motion goes on to say "and other expressions contained in the transcript".

Mr. Speaker: The expressions which have been referred to include the expressions "trickery" and "manufactured crisis". I would doubt that the hon. member could reasonably claim that the use of the words "manufactured crisis" is in itself libelous or slanderous, which I should think is what we should have to find here.

Hon. members might refer to citation 113 of Beauchesne, fourth edition, which reads:

Members often raise so-called "questions of privilege" on matters which should be dealt with as personal explanations or corrections, either in the debates or the proceedings of the House. A question of privilege ought rarely to come up in parliament—

Then later—and this is what I wanted to read in particular:

Libels upon members and aspersions upon them in relation to parliament and interference of any kind with their official duties, are breaches of the privileges of members.

So whether the statement made by the Prime Minister is true is not at issue at all. The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam made this point. He said: Well, we claim there was no manufactured crisis and there was no trickery and we intend to prove this in the course of debate. That is quite right, and that, I suggest, is the position which should be taken by anyone who claims or feels that the statement made by the Prime Minister is inaccurate or untrue. The fact that a statement is untrue does not necessarily form the basis of a question of privilege. The only way in which there could be a breach of privilege would be for the word "trickery" itself to be considered as slanderous. My suggestion is that having regard to the manner in which the word was used on this occasion in a general way in the course of a general statement, it cannot be considered by any hon. members as a personal offence against their integrity as members of parliament.