

and other statements of a like nature, as reported in the official transcript of the said broadcast, constitute a reflection upon the proceedings of this house, a reflection on the conduct and honour of members of this house, and thus constitute a breach of the privileges of said members and of the house itself, and that this house take such action in respect thereof as may be in accord with the practices and conventions established for the protection and safeguarding of the said privileges.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will look into this matter and not much time needs to be taken up on the statement—

Mr. Starr: The motion has not been put.

• (2:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Ontario submits that I should put the motion. I will put the motion only if I rule that there is a prima facie case of privilege. This is the way the matter is to be considered. Before doing this, I am sure hon. members will agree that it is always in order for a member who is criticized to be given an opportunity to make an explanation.

Mr. Pearson: I was going to say, Mr. Speaker, that you would no doubt want to take under advisement this matter proposed by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) at a session which his party has been arguing does not exist, when we have no right to bring any business before this House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr: No government business.

Mr. Pearson: However, he managed to make a little speech before the House of Commons, not on the matter of constitutional reform which was put forward as a desirable subject but with regard to a broadcast made outside the house in which I said the following, which I will quote exactly. The hon. member left out the first part of this paragraph, which appears at page 14 of the transcript. It reads as follows:

I am getting a lot of messages saying: "Are you going to let these people manoeuvre you by this kind of trickery—?"

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pearson: When these people have been telling me we should not be manoeuvred by this kind of trickery they may have been

Reference to Statement by Prime Minister

thinking about a statement made by a Conservative member of parliament, the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Coates), who was quoted by the *Ottawa Journal*, an unimpeachable source, as having said—this was copied from the *Mail Star* of Halifax—that "It was an organized plot by the Conservative opposition that resulted in the government's defeat".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: Now, Mr. Speaker, it is up to you to decide whether the word "trickery" constitutes a breach of privilege of the house or not, even though I quoted it from another message. While you are deciding that I would call your attention to page 6901 of *Hansard* for February 20 when there was a motion to adjourn the house. After the motion had been called the following appears:

Mr. Ricard: It is a rotten Grit trick.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Prime Minister has involved me directly in this matter, and since I have before me the *Ottawa Journal*, I should like to say first of all that I did not see this article in the *Mail Star* of Halifax but I read a similar article in the *Chronicle-Herald* of Halifax which did not quote me as saying there was an organized plot. That was the opinion of the correspondent who wrote the article.

Mr. Pearson: It was an accident.

Mr. Coates: If hon. gentlemen do not mind, what I should like to do is state my personal privilege. At the same time, if the article in the *Halifax Mail Star* does in fact quote me as saying there was an organized plot, then I must say that the article is incorrect. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that I should be given the opportunity to explain the circumstances relating to this allegation.

The circumstances are these. On Monday afternoon it was very apparent to the Conservative party, if not to the Liberal party, that the government could be defeated. The government in fact, had survived a vote on clause 5 in committee. While the clause was not defeated, it passed by only 65 to 62.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Coates: I think it is only fair to allow me to continue because the Prime Minister