

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lundrigan: It was an absolute lie. The minister has no right to leave it on the record.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows he has no right—

Mr. Lundrigan: That is right. I know that.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member confirms that he knows he has no right to accuse another member of the House, whether he is a member on the other side of the House, a member of the government or on his own side of the House, of lying. I even hesitate to use the word. I would hope that, in accordance with the long tradition of parliament, the hon. member will co-operate with the Chair and not use language that is clearly unparliamentary. For over 100 years this has formed the basis of a rule which is accepted by all hon. members. I think we set a very bad example to other parliamentary institutions in this country at all levels of government if the senior House in Canada does not conform to the long established rules of parliamentary debate.

I am sure the hon. member will allow the Chair to complete his remarks. I am referring to another hon. member, not the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate.

That is one of the difficulties of referring to statements made outside the House. It is also a long established practice that members do not ask questions about statements made outside the House and that no reference is made to them. When such questions are asked they should be asked directly rather than by asking ministers to confirm what they have said and whether it is right or wrong, because at that point we get involved in a debate of the kind that has now been initiated by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate. If a statement is made outside the House and another member thinks the statement is wrong, it seems to me there should be an opportunity in the House, not during the question period, to try to offer rectification of the facts, or the matter might be pursued by an hon. member outside the House in response to statements made outside this chamber.

Having said all this, I hope the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate will co-operate with the Chair and seek another opportunity or another way to initiate a debate on the issue. I am sure the hon. member will agree that according to long established practice it is not correct or parliamentary to accuse another member of deliberately misleading the House or of lying. I appreciate that this is a difficult situation in that we are now referring to statements made outside the House, but I hope the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate will assist the Chair and allow us to continue.

Mr. Lundrigan: I did not realize the rest of the statement contains as much garbage as it does. I thought there was only the lie that I am concerned about. It is time for us to reassess that rule. If ministers can do that kind of damage to our system, not the Conservative party, by presenting this kind of position internationally it is time that we re-assessed the rule. Something must be done to prevent ministers from presenting this kind of position to the Canadian people. These men have a great responsibility.

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

ty. Your Honour might as well make an example of me right now because I will not withdraw these remarks.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the rule certainly is clear that anyone who says of a member in the House that what he has said in the House is a lie would be subject to having to withdraw, but to make that statement respecting a statement by a minister made outside the House is, I submit, not contrary to the rule. I have heard that question argued before. If that were not so, loose, idle, disorderly and untruthful statements could be made outside the House and we would be bound within the House not to cast any doubts on the veracity thereof.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, being a freshman in this chamber I am intrigued by one of the comments by Your Honour, namely, that a member of this House is not entitled to and should not at any time use the words "lie" or "lying". If in fact a minister or any other member did state a lie in the House, would it not be appropriate to call him a liar, and if he in fact did state a lie would he not have to resign and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that he might take a closer look at the rules. In any event, the hon. member is asking me a question and the Chair is not and has never been in a position to reply to questions.

What the right hon. member has said perhaps brings forth for the assistance of the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate and the Chair a distinction which is perhaps somewhat theoretical. The Chair still feels it is conducive to disorder in the House for hon. members to rise and say that a lie has been uttered or accuse another member of lying outside the House and, I suppose, saying that he is within the rules because he is saying the lie was uttered outside this chamber.

All that confirms my original statement that it is contrary to the long established practice of this House for members to ask questions during the question period in relation to statements made outside the House. The only result that comes from transgressing the rule is the kind of debate and the kind of difficulty we now have.

I am willing to take the matter under advisement and take into consideration the fact we are dealing with matters that have transpired outside of this chamber. But in spite of what the right hon. member has said I would certainly reaffirm the general statement and principle that it is certainly not according to the long established practice of this House to use these words and make accusations along these lines, even if we are dealing with statements that have been made outside this chamber.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I must rise to say a few words in support of the observance of the long established rule of this House that one member cannot call another hon. member a liar, nor can he accuse him of lies. To suggest, as has been done by the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert, that it is quite all right to call another