

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lang: In matters such as this, members of parliament may actually participate in the spread of remarks, innuendo and slander, with what may be fair comment in reporting by the press, by the way in which they raise these matters in this place. I suggest that the hon. member for Leeds should not be allowed from time to time to introduce matters in this way without making a charge.

Mr. Cossitt: I did.

Mr. Lang: The hon. member said that certain principles "may have possibly been grossly violated". He said, also, "... to allow such things to happen as apparently may have happened here". I wrote down these words as he said them. He also said "... may have used their positions". In all these instances he is making suggestions, charges and innuendo, of what? If he is charging wrongdoing of me as a member of parliament, let him make a charge and let him lay his seat on the line to back that charge.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1520)

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons has just observed one of the worst examples of cloying hypocrisy since many of us came here.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) said he thought the time had come to take a stand. The only time the Minister of Transport decided the time had come to take a stand on behalf of members of parliament was when the heat got so hot on him that he decided he had to climb out of his Jetstar.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): When the positions of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) were distorted in the press and when his personality was examined in the press, was he defended by the Minister of Transport? No, the Minister of Transport sat on the sidelines and grinned. When the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield) was leader of the opposition and an hon. member of this House of Commons, when he was attacked and when his position was distorted by the press and the public of this country in many ways, and by the Liberal party, did the minister stand up and defend the hon. member for Halifax? No. The honour of this House and the honour of members of parliament have no more glowing an advocate than when the advocate himself is attacked in the press. That is why I call it cloying hypocrisy.

Let me get to the merits of the case, now that we have disposed of the minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Privilege—Mr. Baldwin

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The minister may have been upset by the fact that his story is juxtaposed beside an advertisement in the same publication saying, "Losing 78 pounds saved my marriage". I do not know whether that has anything to do with it.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): That's pretty cheap.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question at stake here in this proposed question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) is essentially as it concerns the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). There have been other allegations concerning statements made by the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Mr. Joyal), and there has been some indication of the intention of the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) to raise questions about some broadcasting matter in Newfoundland.

However, in so far as the Minister of Transport is concerned, the question is whether the minister has exercised that legal right which is the right of every citizen, and in so doing has done something which exceeds or in some way offends the privileges of a member of parliament. That is the issue at stake, and I think we ought to avoid arguing the matter as though we had accepted the fact that that was a question of privilege, and concentrate on whether that constitutes a question of privilege.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I was just clearing my throat. I am now coming to that part of the argument. I think all hon. members of the House of Commons know, when we are dealing with a matter of this kind, we are not obliged to make out a case but we are obliged to make out a prima facie case at first blush and then the matter is to be examined by the committee. Aside from the point raised by the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Cossitt), which I think he did in a very quiet and responsible way—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): —the question is whether it offends the privileges of this House for a minister of the Crown, in the exercise of what he has called his personal rights as an individual, to deal with a newspaper or to deal with a publication. Is he in any different position in this country than the ordinary citizen, particularly when the article refers directly to the minister of the Crown and his position of esteem—at least in the opinion of the journalist—in the country and to his capacity as a minister of the Crown and as a member of parliament? Is that minister in any different position today?

Is the case affected in any way by the fact that between the *Canadian* magazine and the newspapers which are its benefactors, in terms of articles which are published each week, there is an indemnity between F.P. Publications and the *Canadian* magazine so that if they, in a sense, said "Publish and be damned", the newspaper might refuse to publish on the some-