

Question of Privilege

outcome. That is a well established principle and should be followed, particularly when the hon. member happens to be a minister of the Crown, and particularly because these charges affect a former prime minister, all of the present members of the Privy Council and those members who were part of the former government's administration.

Regarding the case now under discussion in which a member has made charges, I point out that strictly speaking no motion at all is required since the responsibility of the member making charges is well known and has been supported by Speakers throughout the years. The simple fact is that having made charges a member is obliged to substantiate them or give up his seat.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: That is the position in which the minister finds himself and that is precisely the issue which parliament, not an inquiry, must decide.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: There is nothing to prevent the minister at this very moment from stating the details of his charges, the evidence upon which they are based, the names of the people involved, how they are involved and all the circumstances. The minister owes this not only to parliament but, as a man of honour and integrity, he owes it to himself.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cardin: Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite obvious that the members opposite do not want an inquiry into this matter.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cardin: I should like to ask the hon. member for Yukon whether he can tell me what charges I made against the Leader of the Opposition or what charges I made against any member.

An hon. Member: All of them.

Mr. Cardin: Which one?

Hon. Hugh John Flemming (Victoria-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) will read the *Journal* of this afternoon he will find on the front page that he is recorded as stating that ministers were involved. He will find that a member of the press gallery then queried "ministers"? The minister is reported as having replied "Yes, ministers." He then is reported as having added the word "Plural". If ever there

[Mr. Nielsen.]

was a question of privilege and justification for demanding that the minister substantiate his statement, this is it. The hon. member for Yukon has suggested he should do so in justice to himself. I am one who has quite a high opinion of the minister, but that high opinion is rapidly disappearing today as a result of the things he has been guilty of since this morning.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that you should not be splitting hairs about the rules and procedures when the reputations of a large group of people sitting in this house are at stake.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Flemming: The Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) got to his feet this afternoon and, as I interpreted his remarks, referred to this matter as a little difference of opinion between parties and suggested that a bit of controversy exists.

● (9:50 p.m.)

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we may have our differences but I have never yet, in the time I have been here, known a minister or a member to make statements to the press that reflected on the honour and integrity of other members.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Flemming: The Prime Minister laughs. I say that he is treating this matter as a great big joke. This is no joke.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Flemming: Therefore, in my opinion and to the extent that I happen to be personally involved—

An hon. Member: Aha.

Mr. Flemming: This is no joke; this is precisely the point. It becomes the duty of the Prime Minister to say to his Minister of Justice, "Prove what you have said". That is his duty. But the Prime Minister proposes to appoint a commission and the commission will sit for some time and consider this matter. As has been stated this evening, during that whole period of time the reputation of a number of people will be in jeopardy. Therefore I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister has no choice in this matter.

The Prime Minister must of necessity demand that his Minister of Justice prove what he has said. We should also have the answer to this question: Was the Minister of Justice,