

*Question of Privilege*

Spencer case there were insinuations from all parts of the house to the effect that I was trying to hide something, that the government was trying to hide matters that were scandalous, that we did not want to prosecute Spencer because he would perhaps come out with the names of people whose heads would swim.

There were insinuations right and left. No one on this side of the house asked that there be charges made but we did, under the conditions that were asked for by members of the N.D.P., agree to a judicial inquiry into that matter.

In this particular instance I did not make any insinuations of any kind against anyone that had not already been in the newspapers. In the interests of the individuals concerned, in the interests of people who might be involved in this particular case, I suggest that the best, the most honourable and the most equitable way of solving this problem is as we did in the Spencer case, by having a judicial inquiry and having a judge report on the decision and the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Starr:** You tell us now. This is the minister of mud.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Terence Nugent (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, I have never heard a more remarkable speech than that just made by the Minister of Justice. If I understand his argument correctly, what he says is that all he did was answer questions that the press raised. I think that the complete picture is that he threw out this suggestion on Friday, that the press took the hook and came to him and that he got the sort of headlines he was looking for. If this is not weaseling, I do not know what is.

The minister is getting now in this motion exactly what he wanted when he first raised the matter. The matter is getting nationwide publicity. If he is in charge of the ministry of justice he should have some concept of justice and should know that the reputation of men cannot be put under a shadow in this manner without the person who makes the allegations and raises them being prepared to back up those accusations. The suggestion of the Minister of Justice now is that this was accidental—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I appreciate the views expressed by the hon. member.

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[*Translation*]

Does the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) wish to add something?

**Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe):** Mr. Speaker, for our part we are not ready to add anything to the debate at this moment. We would have liked to know the views of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) on the problem which is now being discussed.

[*English*]

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think I am as aware as any other member of the house that this is a very serious and grave situation. I can understand the feeling of the hon. member who raised the matter in the way he has done and the motion he has submitted, and I can understand the feeling of the Minister of Justice after what he has been through in recent weeks in connection with a case in which there were many accusations and suspicions levelled at him.

But I should like, Mr. Speaker, if I might deal with the matter as a parliamentary one, and as the leader of the house because of my position as Prime Minister, to suggest to you, sir, in view of the seriousness of the matter I might be permitted to consult, which I would do without delay, with the mover of the motion and yourself to see how best the matter can be resolved immediately so that justice may be done.

**Mr. Starr:** I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question at this point, and I think it is a serious one. Does he think that the reflections cast on a large group of Privy Councillors in the previous government should remain unanswered for any time at all? Should they not be dealt with at once in order to remove the stigma from these people?

**Mr. Pearson:** I appreciate the earnestness of the hon. member when he talks about reflections cast upon Privy Councillors because I know something about that myself. I have been told that crime entered into my office, and that kind of thing, and I know how he feels because I felt the same way in reverse.

I do not want to delay this matter. It must be dealt with, and dealt with immediately. I am asking for the privilege as leader of the house to consult with the hon. member who moved the motion and Your Honour, to see how it can be dealt with quickly and effectively.