

*Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward:* I want to say here, Mr. Chairman, that I do not propose to take any part in the discussion or vote upon it.

*Mr. Pearce:* I would like to support the resolution, and I would ask Sir Joseph Ward if, as the oldest Parliamentarian in the House, he does not recognize the fact that it would be impossible to carry on—

*The Chairman:* I do not think it is fair to Sir Joseph Ward after he has intimated that he will not take any part in the discussion or vote, nor can I allow any discussion on the matter.

*Mr. Pearce:* I was only drawing his attention to the position that as an old Parliamentarian he must recognize that it would be impossible to carry on the business of the country if such statements were allowed to be made accusing the Chairman of impertinence. If the Chairman did anything which was not correct, and if the words were withdrawn, it would be competent for the Committee to consider the action of the Chairman; but surely it would be impossible to carry on the Parliament of the country if any member or any member of a Committee is allowed to accuse the Chairman or Speaker of impertinence. That seems to be the position, and if the expression was withdrawn, and there was anything else to be dealt with the matter could be gone into. I was not, of course, at the meeting.

*Mr. Hanan:* I think it is the desire of the House that this difficulty should be settled out of Court—in other words, should be settled by this Committee. That is the feeling of the majority of fair-minded men in the House. Now, what is the position? We have one member of the Committee alleging that something was said that gave rise to a feeling of irritation on his part and resentment. Now, we have got to consider in going back to the House, or even making any recommendation to the House, what was it that gave rise to this remark being addressed by Sir Joseph Ward to the Chairman. Were the circumstances such that a man—an ordinary man with ordinary feelings—would resent a statement being made to him as to the way his answer was requested; also as to what was the tone in which that statement was directed towards Sir Joseph Ward. Now, we know this: that very often a statement or a request may be unobjectionable in its form, but very objectionable in the tone and method—

*Hon. Mr. Allen:* I hope Mr. Hanan is not going to get himself into the same difficulty.

*Mr. Hanan:* I am very sorry the Minister is so keenly looking to make trouble.

*Hon. Mr. Allen:* That is very unfair.

*Mr. Hanan:* I have said nothing that any Judge or Court in the land would take exception to. It is only a very excitable individual like the Minister of Finance who would make the remark he has done. I think that the Chairman ought to recognize this on calm consideration, that it is not usual for a chairman to take upon himself to dictate—

*Hon. Mr. Allen:* I must object.

*The Chairman:* Mr. Hanan, kindly resume your seat. I must ask you to keep off, at any rate, such debatable ground as to say that the Chairman dictates. I must ask you to withdraw the word "dictates."

*Mr. Hanan:* What statement do you take exception to?

*The Chairman:* You said the Chairman dictates.

*Mr. Hanan:* I said "a" chairman.

*The Chairman:* I admit that.

*Mr. Hanan:* Am I not justified in referring to the conduct of "a" chairman?

*The Chairman:* Yes, you can.

*Mr. Hanan:* I say, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, that when you are bringing to account a member who acts in a way that exception is taken to, that you have also a right to consider the circumstances which gave rise to that comment being made, whether it comes from the Chairman or anybody else, and I therefore say that what is desirable is that the Chairman and Sir Joseph Ward should meet one another.

*The Chairman:* I must ask you to resume your seat. The Chairman's action is not under discussion, and I must ask you to leave any action of the Chairman out of your remarks. The action of the Chairman is not under discussion.

*Mr. Hanan:* Is not the Chairman's ruling under discussion?

*The Chairman:* No; the report of the House that the words be referred to the Committee is under consideration.

*Mr. Hanan:* I submit now that if it is to go to the House that we should have had a full and explicit statement of the evidence taken down and of the statements made that deal with this incident. What went before the House was an extract. That did not give full particulars. You have only got to read the report of the *Dominion* or *Evening Post* to show that the extract furnished the House last night was incomplete in many respects. Now, what was the report?

*The Chairman:* I would remind you that what was reported to the House was the unanimous wish of this Committee, and upon which you voted, and it was referred to the House.

*Mr. Hanan:* And surely if it is to go back to the House we will send it back to the House with a full statement of the evidence, in order that the House may come to a conclusion. Does the Chairman say that that extract furnished to the House was a full and complete statement?

*The Chairman:* Yes, I do.

*Mr. Hanan:* Then, according to your statement, the extract was an invention on the part of the reporter. There were certain statements in the *Dominion*, *Evening Post*, and *New Zealand Times* which do not appear in the extract furnished to the House, which have an important bearing on this matter. It seems to me that if you are going to report this to the House you want a full, clear, and explicit statement of what did take place, and there should be no important omissions. There are two in this matter. There is the Chairman's ruling, the Chairman's action, and whether the Chairman did right or wrong; whether he dictated, or the way he made his reference was in a manner that would irritate. Many a chairman recognizes on calm consider-