

Inquiries of the Ministry

We cannot allow that to happen if this system is to work at all. The Registrar General having made the speech he made in Montreal; the President of the Privy Council having made the speech he delivered in Toronto, and in the light of the statements made on this subject last week by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Prime Minister, I say the time to debate this issue is now, and I am sure I am speaking for the whole of the Canadian people even if the government is not.

Mr. Speaker: I thank hon. members for their views and for the assistance they have extended to me. However, as I said at the outset after listening to the argument put forth by the Leader of the Opposition, I felt that in view of the precedents and the long established procedure accepted by all hon. members, for perhaps a hundred years, and in view of what is contained in Beauchesne it was rather obvious what decision should be reached by the Chair in the circumstances. I even hesitate to read again the well worn citation from Beauchesne's fourth edition, citation 100 (3):

"Urgency" within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but it means "urgency of debate"—

This indicates that an adjournment of the ordinary business of the house is to be granted when there are no other opportunities for debate. I have no statistics to support this, and I have not looked at the precedents, but I doubt very much whether at any time in the history of the Canadian parliament the Chair has granted a motion for the adjournment of the debate on the speech from the throne for the purpose of initiating another debate. My understanding is that the debate on the speech from the throne is intended precisely to enable all hon. members to debate exactly what they wish to debate. Hon. members have all agreed that this is a matter of extreme importance and extreme urgency. In an hour or so they will all have an opportunity to debate for the rest of the morning, this afternoon and this evening the subject which has been brought to the attention of the house by the Leader of the Opposition. Representatives of all parties can do this, one after the other.

The right hon. gentleman said parliament has the right to know whether the minister was enunciating government policy, and the right to know what government policy is. He may be quite correct in this suggestion; I certainly have no right to argue with that

[Mr. Graffey.]

proposition at all. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition has the right to ask of the Prime Minister or of someone speaking in the name of the government whether a minister speaking outside the house is enunciating the policy of the government. It is the right of any hon. member to ask such a question during the question period. But I doubt whether the granting of this motion would make it easier or more possible for the government to enunciate its policy, or whether the government would wish to do so during a debate brought about by a motion for adjournment under standing order 26 as distinct from a debate provided under the rules for consideration of the speech from the throne.

For these reasons I see no other possible determination of the matter on the part of the Chair than to refuse the motion advanced by the Leader of the Opposition.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**VIET NAM—SPEECH BY PRESIDENT OF PRIVY COUNCIL**

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Your suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that a question might be asked at this time prompts me to do so. I would ask the President of the Privy Council whether the Prime Minister has given members of his cabinet the right to say what they want to say regardless of whether it represents government policy. He made the statement in the course of a speech copies of which were delivered to the press, to the Prime Minister and to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, that "the United States for its part has become enmeshed in a bloody civil war in Viet Nam which cannot be justified on either moral or strategic grounds". Does this represent any change in the opinion of the government as expressed in the words uttered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs on June 10, 1965, when he said:

Suffice it to say that if North Viet Nam succeeds in taking over the whole of Viet Nam by force, if the rest of the world is prepared to sit back and see this happen, saying feebly that it is after all only a domestic rebellion so why not accept the inevitable, we would I think be guilty of an error of the same nature as the mistakes made at Munich, and before that, in the League of Nations.

Would the minister say whether a new code of cabinet ethics has been issued giving him this freedom? We should like to know.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think the Leader of the Opposition misunderstood the suggestion I