

Motion to Adjourn

Standing Order in question indicates that the only statement that can be made by an hon. member making a motion under Standing Order 26 is the statement that he has proposed for consideration by the Chair. I suggest that the hon. member has given the essence of his argumentation, and I think a ruling should be given on the basis of the statement presented to the Chair under the provisions of Standing Order 26.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition and all hon. members that this is a rather difficult decision to make. I fully understand the complexity of the problem that is now before us. It is never easy in any circumstance for the Chair to decide whether the business of the House should be adjourned for the purpose of considering a specific matter of urgent and national importance.

This is a matter of urgent importance and national interest. In the circumstances I am wondering whether we should adjourn the House to consider the matter. In many of these decisions the Chair has to make a judgment decision by taking into account the facts as they are known to Mr. Speaker. I sometimes wonder whether this means that I should consult with hon. members who are familiar with the situation, or whether I should be satisfied with reading the newspapers and listening to radio or television broadcasts and then making my judgment on the facts as they are known to me. I am afraid that this is all that can be done.

Without having held consultations of any kind, my understanding from my reading of the news is that consultations or meetings are to be held today. Obviously these consultations will be of some importance and their results will be relevant to the urgency of this matter. My own view would be that I would be well advised not to make an affirmative ruling at this moment, though this is without prejudice to the right of the Leader of the Opposition to make his motion tomorrow or at a later date depending on the outcome of discussions which may be taking place at this time.

On the basis of this rather unprofessional information I would think hon. members would agree with me that it would not be wise for the Chair to put the motion at this time. It might be premature on my part to put the motion today. However, at the same time I fully reserve the right of the Leader of the Opposition to propose the motion to the House either tomorrow or later.

[Mr. Speaker.]

[*Translation*]

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Charlevoix is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the House would agree to revert to motions, but since it has been said a moment ago that the Postmaster General had a very important meeting this morning with the C.N.T.U. officials in connection with this important mail problem in Montreal and its national implications, I wonder whether the House would agree to the minister making a statement about the meeting held this morning. If there is unanimous consent, I think the minister might inform the hon. members.

Mr. Speaker: Does the House agree to revert to motions so as to enable the minister to make a statement on the subject mentioned by the member for Charlevoix?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: There seems to be an agreement. Let us therefore revert to motions.

[*English*]

I recognize the minister so he can make a statement at this time.

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

POST OFFICE

STATEMENT BY MINISTER ON MONTREAL DISPUTE

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General and Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I met the leaders of the C.N.T.U. this morning. The position of the federal government was discussed at length, and I handed the union leaders a letter describing this position in definite terms. It would be advisable, with the unanimous consent of the House, that I table copies of this letter in the two official languages. I feel this would clarify the situation and keep all members posted.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The minister is suggesting that the House give unanimous consent to allowing the minister to table a certain document. Is that agreed?