

Ajournment Debate

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, as far as the speech of the previous speaker is concerned, I would like to point out that since the question period early this afternoon, he has been making vague accusations, using words such as cover-up and stonewalling, saying that there is a bad smell of scandal and trying to implicate an honourable and respectable senator. I feel that he is taking undue advantage of his parliamentary immunity to question the integrity of someone who is not here, who cannot defend himself in the House and who cannot rise on a question of privilege. Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) or any one of his colleagues are not drips and are really serious about their accusations, they should not only rise in this House, where they know that they are very well protected, in an attempt to injure the reputation of the government and of individuals, but also make the same accusations in a direct and straightforward manner outside the House before the press. I believe that members opposite are trying to create bogus scandals and that is why they would like the House to continue to sit, because they will not have the guts to repeat their charges and innuendos outside the House.

Mr. Speaker, the discussions and speeches that we have heard from members opposite lead me to believe that they do not have much to do except try to tarnish reputations without good reason. I believe that the House should adjourn as soon as possible because we have the impression that they are being over-critical to no avail since they use the House of Commons to protect themselves. As for the uranium case, I believe that if Senator Austin or anyone else had been directly involved, he would not have been spared by the investigators.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Shefford, but it is now five o'clock.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Châteauguay (Mr. Watson)—External Affairs—Southeast Asia—Abuses of human rights; the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields)—Energy—Future of Alsands project at Fort McMurray, Alta. (a)

Possible commercial arrangement with oil companies; the hon. member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight)—Canadian Wheat Board—Query respecting initial wheat prices for new crop year.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper, namely notices of motions (papers), private bills, public bills.

● (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[*English*]

Orders Nos. 22, 5, 4, 35, 43 and 1 allowed to stand by unanimous consent.

APPLICATION OF FEDERAL LAWS IN VARIOUS PROVINCIAL COURTS

The House resumed, from Thursday, April 2, 1981, consideration of the motion of Mr. Herbert:

That an Order of the House do issue for copies of all correspondence, minutes of meetings, studies and other communications of the Department of Justice relating to the comparison of the application by the various provincial courts of federal laws.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I must draw to the attention of hon. members the fact that the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) is not present in the House and that the motion cannot be withdrawn in his absence except by adjourning debate on the particular motion by unanimous consent. I am not sure whether other hon. members want to pursue the debate or not.

Mrs. Appolloni: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I will recognize the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence (Mrs. Appolloni).

Mrs. Ursula Appolloni (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the motion gives us an opportunity to discuss the general subject of disparity in sentencing by judges in our criminal courts. Members of the public and others who were not able to gather full information on criminal cases have to rely on reports in newspapers and the other media for information on sentences. Such reports inevitably are condensed and cannot cover all the facts of a case. They cannot describe all the circumstances of a crime, and they cannot portray the background and criminal record of an offender. The information which is available to the public at large is necessarily incomplete, so when apparently similar offenders are reported to have received widely different sentences for apparently similar crimes, these may not be examples of disparity at all, for the offenders may not in fact be