

wrongly, a member of the house on his own responsibility has made charges, has said he has affidavits, and has created a situation which it seems to me in itself argues that there is urgency of debate.

I also ask Your Honour to look very practically at the point just raised by the hon. member for Medicine Hat. He asked, what is so pressing that we should set aside all the other business planned for today?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Including medicare.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Starr: 1968—maybe.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I thought the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was interested in medicare.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Promised in 1919.

Mr. Knowles: Now I have heard everything. It was promised 47 years ago on August 6. The Liberal party wanted to do something about medicare then. Now, in a short afternoon, the Secretary of State for External Affairs says, "Do it today."

● (3:30 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Knowles: Let us look at this seriously. It is now 3.31 p.m. We have not yet had the calling of the orders of the day and the question period, according to our rules, is to last for half an hour today. Then there is private members' hour at five o'clock. If you do a little arithmetic you will see that not more than 45 or 50 minutes remain today for the debate on medicare, and what has not taken place in 47 years is not going to be dealt with today in 45 minutes. I think the suggestion that this debate is putting aside all of the business of this house is a play on words. The suggestion simply is that we use the rest of the day to deal with a matter which has been raised today. If the Secretary of State for External Affairs is so concerned about medicare, I suggest that he put his weight behind that bill in its original form so that it will come into effect on July 1, 1967, instead of trying to prevent the house from hearing about this matter today as I think is its right.

There is not much time left today, and I think we should at least hear in full from the member for Edmonton-Strathcona. I do not know whether he is right or wrong, but he

Motion for Adjournment

says he has affidavits and I think he should be permitted to state his case in full. I think also that the Minister of National Defence has the right and the responsibility to be heard in this house today. When you consider what has happened here today, I submit there is urgency of debate.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I can hardly believe my ears that you would not let the medicare debate go on right now.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Chair is trying to listen to the arguments which are being presented in support of the motion.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to add my viewpoint to that of others who have suggested there is in fact urgency of debate here. In respect of the original matter which is in issue I have no interest in the sense that I did not participate, but I was very impressed by one statement made by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. I call to my support in this the statement made in another building in this city earlier this week when a former member of this house, Miss Pauline Jewett, in addressing a certain convention, emphasized the tremendous importance in a parliamentary system of the committee structure, something with which I am in complete agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the house has constituted a number of committees and has delivered into the custody of these committees a number of tremendously important matters. There is the committee on consumer credit dealing with the cost of living, the committee on transport and communications which shortly will be dealing with the question of the new railway legislation, the committee on the Bank Act, and so on. I am not commenting on the truthfulness or otherwise, but the suggestion has been made that witnesses, whose evidence is material, relevant and very important, have had their statements tampered with. I suggest to this house and to Your Honour that this matter should be settled, that is, to what extent in the future are we entitled to accept statements made by those who are under the control or influence of ministers of the crown? To what extent are we entitled to accept the statements which they give in evidence and to what extent, when reports are made based on evidence given by such people, are we entitled to accept at face value those statements? I submit that this is a tremendously important matter and that if our committee structure is