

Invoking of War Measures Act

term—that might be endangering the government of the province of Quebec. Suggestions are even being raised that perhaps some of that power lay within the government of Quebec itself.

The War Measures Act has been in effect now for 13 days and has substantially affected the freedom and the entrusted rights of all Canadians. To this date we have not received a clear statement from the government of this country or from the Prime Minister as to the necessity for the step that has been taken.

I believe—and in this respect I plead with the Prime Minister—that in order to do justice to the people of this country it is imperative that the kind of misleading and conflicting statements that are being made both inside and outside the House cease. In addition, to clarify matters the Prime Minister should offer to the House at this time a statement fully clarifying the confusion that exists, not just among politicians at far ends of the country but within the government itself.

If the Prime Minister is not able to make this statement, I trust he will realize that it is certainly in the best interests of the country to establish some form of independent body, whether it be a joint committee of the two Houses of Parliament, as I have suggested, or a commission as suggested by a number of eminent persons in this country during recent days. Without that kind of information we will be increasingly treated to questions of privilege and to confusion which can but demoralize and greatly exacerbate tensions that presently exist in this country.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has given the Chair the notice required under the Standing Orders, and I have given some serious thought to the most important problem raised in the hon. member's suggested question of privilege. As he and all hon. members realize, the decision that has to be made by the Chair now is not whether this is an urgent matter, whether it is an important matter, or whether or not it should be discussed by the House; the problem I have to determine and the decision that has to be made is whether there is here a question of privilege.

I have had opportunity on a number of occasions to indicate what, in my view, a question of privilege consists of. I have serious doubts whether, even in view of the serious conditions outlined by the hon. member, there is a question of privilege or that a question of privilege should be the vehicle used by the House for the consideration of the matter raised by the hon. member. As I read his motion, I have the distinct impression it is a rather substantive motion. What he proposes is really not so much that conflicting statements be studied but that this whole matter be considered by a special joint committee of both Houses of Parliament. He proposes a comprehensive inquiry by way of a joint committee or perhaps in some other way. That, in my view, is not really a question of privilege.

There are a number of precedents which indicate that in circumstances such as those indicated by the hon. member for Egmont there is no justification on the part of the Chair to rule that there is a prima facie case of

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

privilege. I refer hon. members particularly to Citation 113 of Beauchesne's fourth edition.

My conclusion must be that the hon. member's proposal is, rather, a substantive motion and that perhaps he will find some other way to have his proposal considered by the House. I suggest it cannot be done by way of a question of privilege at this time.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TRANSPORT

WESTERN ONTARIO—ELIMINATION OF PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. W. M. Howe (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43 I ask the unanimous consent of the House to propose a motion in the following case of urgent and pressing necessity. I refer to the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission cutting off over 400 miles of passenger train service in western Ontario, ending a vital service of over 80 years duration and reducing development possibilities. The final train will be on November 1.

Therefore, if the House gives unanimous consent, I intend to move that the whole question be re-examined by the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications in order to bring in amendments to the Railway Act involving reduction or discontinuance of rail service as suggested by the studies being conducted by the CTC and the provincial government of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion proposed by the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo. This motion is proposed under the terms of Standing Order 43 which requires unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will have heard the same nays I heard. In the circumstances the motion cannot be put.

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GRAIN

TABLING OF PROPOSAL FOR PRODUCTION AND RECEIPTS POLICY

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table under Standing Order 41(2) copies in both official languages of a proposal for a production and grains receipts policy for the western grains industry.