

why he intended to send for the hon. member for Kent was that the hon. member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Verville) had the floor, and he thought it desirable to have in the Chair a member who understood the French language.

Mr. BLAIN: It was because of the request made by hon. gentlemen on the other side a few hours before, in connection with the same debate.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Hon. members on this side have urged that the Deputy Speaker should take the Chair. My hon. friend has given the reason why he sent for the hon. gentleman, but that is not the statement made by the hon. member for Kent, who has said nothing as to why he was coming down to take the Chair, but simply that he was coming for that purpose, and when he got there he learned that the hon. member for Peel had sent for him.

Mr. BLAIN: My hon. friend was in the House when the hon. member for Kent stated clearly and distinctly that my statement of the case was absolutely in accordance with his own.

Mr. PUGSLEY: That is true, but my hon. friend from Peel states only half of the case, and it is his half of the case with which the hon. member for Kent agrees. But it is the other half of the case to which I am referring. How did the hon. member for Kent come down at the psychological moment when the hon. member for Peel was sending for him?

Mr. AIKINS: I understand that the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley) has made the statement when I was out of the House that it was by some prearrangement that I occupied the Chair on the night of the 14th of March. The fact was that the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Nickle) suggested to me that I should take the Chair for a few moments. I then noticed that the Deputy Speaker nodded to me; I went down to him, and he asked me to take the Chair. I was accordingly appointed to the Chair by the Speaker. I did not consult the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers) or any other person about taking the Chair, nor did I expect to take the Chair until within two minutes of the time when I did take it. I do not make any apology for any of my rulings. They were not prepared in anticipation; they were given as the occasion arose.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I will take from the hon. member for Brandon almost anything if he will state it as a matter of fact. But it would take a pretty stiff statement from my hon. friend to make me believe that it was not known in the proper quarter what the view of my hon. friend from Brandon

Mr. PUGSLEY.

was as to those amendments, before he was called to the Chair.

Mr. AIKINS: Do I understand that a question is asked?

Mr. PUGSLEY: No, I am not asking a question.

Mr. AIKINS: I had not read the amendments carefully until I was in the Chair, and had formed no opinion at all as to the point of order until it was raised.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Take it back.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Then, the only thing we can say is that my hon. friend can only justify the judgment which he gave upon the ground that it was a hasty and ill-considered judgment.

Mr. AIKINS: I am not ashamed of it, and it was approved by the House.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Of course it was approved by the House, and the House came pretty near approving of the action of the Chairman, the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) when he sought to shut off discussion on a point of order. Fortunately for the honour of this House, the right hon. the Prime Minister happened to come in at the proper moment and prevented such a breach of the rules of Parliament as the committee was about to commit. It only shows that we ought to be exceedingly careful, that all these decisions should be given either by yourself, Mr. Speaker, or by the Deputy Speaker, who have had time to study the rules, who presumably are above party bias, and whose judgment therefore would be of more value than that of the chairmen who are merely called to take the Chair temporarily.

Then we come to my hon. friend from Kent (Mr. Robidoux), who took the Chair under the circumstances I have described. Now, Mr. Speaker, do you think that my right hon. friend the Prime Minister would expect a young member like the hon. member for Kent to bring his judgment to bear upon the rules of the House, and upon parliamentary law, so as to enable him to pass a fair opinion upon the request of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister to shut off discussion? That is the request which was made to the hon. member for Kent, N.B., when he was occupying the Chair. After the point of order had been discussed for a certain time, the Prime Minister said: Mr. Chairman, I think the discussion has gone far enough. These may not be his exact words, but they give the meaning of what he said. Then occurred an incident which to us upon this side of the House, who had been under a very long strain defending, as we thought, the rights of the minority of this House,