

Administration of Justice

security and other reasons it may well be that this house should properly translate the question to another body. The body that has been mentioned is a commission of judicial inquiry. Before the house can do that it seems to me it must assure itself that none of those things which are precious to it for the preservation of its own privileges are in any way diminished. One of these comes to mind immediately, and it has been mentioned. We are reluctant to translate the area of scrutiny from ourselves to another judicial body until the privilege of some of our members is protected. I think this is the reason for the continual demand that names be named. What I believe we mean, in the proper sense, is that people be unnamed so that our members are protected before the arena of consideration has shifted from here to some other body.

The other aspect that impresses me is that we are also now faced with the suggestion that an act of the executive of the government, by order in council, empower a body to look into aspects of conduct and utterances which, as I have mentioned before, have reflection upon the house and some or all of its members. I should think that this chamber, before embarking upon such a step involving the relationship between the executive and legislative branches, which is the essence of our parliamentary system of government, would wish to know a great deal more about what are likely to be the terms of reference.

I would invite the person most able to help us in this regard, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) himself, to assist us in this very important matter. Certainly we have to move in some direction and I should like him to assure us that the members sitting in this house are not themselves involved in any of the allegations he is reported to have made in any part of this country. I should like him to let us know the manner in which he is or is not making use of security files in such a course as he has embarked upon, which has brought all this to a head.

The issue relates, of course, to conduct or, most certainly, to the utterances of one of the ministers of the Crown, a member of a government which exists by virtue of the continuing confidence of this chamber, and their relationship to us is of the essence, even if some of the members of our body are not involved. I think it is extremely serious that, as governments change and long after they

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

have changed, security files involving people no longer in office are being ransacked and discussed publicly.

I am not one of those who are fully prepared to condemn the Minister of Justice outright, although he has made great mistakes. If I may say so, I think he has suffered a great deal. Perhaps if his Prime Minister had backed him last Friday and backed him down this Friday we would not be in the situation we are now in.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, just a word or two or rather some questions I should like to ask the Prime Minister.

The Conservatives are now suggesting that the house should go into committee of the whole to study the matter and then refer the whole thing to the committee on privileges and elections, if need be.

Right now, if you happen to be walking anywhere in the corridors of the parliament buildings and to meet newspapermen or radio and television commentators, we are told that, according to confirmed reports, Miss Munsinger is very much alive and living in Munich.

Is the government exercising any control over the news which is reaching us today in parliament? Is Miss Munsinger alive? If newspapermen can state that telephone calls are being exchanged between Canada and Munich and that Miss Munsinger has allegedly revealed names at this time, is the government or the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) controlling such news now? And if it is true that Miss Munsinger is alive and ready to come here and say what she knows about the Munsinger case, I cannot see why the Conservatives are insisting so much today on the whole thing being referred to the committee of the whole or the committee on privileges and elections.

The government should take it upon itself to have her come to Canada and to set up, as proposed this morning by the Prime Minister, a judicial inquiry where everything would come to light, so that the members of the government, Conservatives, Liberals or Cr ditistes, and all the population might know what this is all about.

I would like the Prime Minister to answer this question. Is it true that Miss Munsinger is alive and living in Munich? Has the government been informed of the telephone calls made today between Canada and Europe to