

Motion for Adjournment

he alleges against a minister of the crown, the accusations, insinuations or charges involved should be looked into by the house at the first opportunity.

We have no alternative but to rely on the words of ministers who give answers to the house, and it is up to the house to take any corrective steps necessary in any situation that may have evolved which is not in accordance with the normal course. The hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona has taken it upon himself to bring a charge or charges. He has made certain allegations. In such circumstances it is not the matter itself that must be considered urgent but rather, as Beauchesne states in citation 100(3), the question of urgency of debate.

One of the functions of a committee of the house is to enlighten hon. members. Witnesses appearing before a committee have a duty to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. If the minister has in any way at all meddled with the procedures of a committee, if anybody has fooled around or prior to a committee meeting has pressured a witness to change his opinion, by force or any other means, it is the duty of the house to have an immediate investigation, an immediate debate on the matter and clear the air once and for all. I think a debate on this matter is urgently needed at the moment.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, it is a little difficult to separate the question of privilege raised a few minutes ago from the motion now made under standing order 26 because they deal with the same matter, and I submit that to some extent the argument as to the urgency or otherwise of debate gets very much involved.

Citation 100 in Beauchesne, which deals with the matter of whether or not a motion falls within the precedents for making a motion under standing order 26, says in paragraph 2 that the matter "must be so pressing that public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention." Of course, as Your Honour well knows, urgency within this rule does not apply to the matter itself but applies to the urgency of debate. I think Your Honour will have to consider not whether there is urgency in the matter, not whether parliament should deal with it now or at some time in the future, but whether the urgency of debate is so important that all other matters shall be set aside and the debate sought shall be given precedence over any and all other public business that is before the house.

[Mr. Langlois (Mégantic).]

I suggest to Your Honour that the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona defeats his own argument in that respect since he has claimed it took him many days to gather the evidence that he is now prepared to present to the house. I suggest that the argument advanced by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre to the effect that some five or six weeks have gone by since the question was first raised is also defeated by the citation which says that the matter must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention.

Mr. Churchill: I believed the minister for five weeks.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of whether this matter should be discussed in parliament. Hon. members, including the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona and the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, know very well that there are other avenues open to them in order to bring this matter to parliament.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): What are they?

Mr. Olson: There are other ways in which this can be done, with the proper notice given, etc., but what they are now asking is that all other public business, all other matters that within the rules have been brought before parliament, be now set aside so that this particular matter can be discussed. In the arguments advanced by those two hon. members they stated that a number of weeks have gone by during which this matter has had some public attention and therefore it does not all of a sudden become so urgent that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention. I suggest that this, and this alone, is the question Your Honour has to consider at this time.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I add just a few words to the arguments that have been made concerning the urgency of debate with respect to this matter. If my memory serves me correctly this is the first time I have said anything publicly on the present defence issue—

Mr. Graftey: It is one of the few things the hon. member has missed.

Mr. Knowles:—but I speak now as a member of parliament who is concerned over what has happened here today. Rightly or