

Administration of Justice

We have now lost two days discussing this case and, Mr. Speaker, I repeat that if the security of the state is, or was, in danger, with this Munsinger affair, we have said all that can be said about the matter in this house, and I suggest that a judicial inquiry should be established.

If this matter concerns only personalities, I do not see what the interest in the private lives of people may have to do with this case, in this house, because a man's private life belongs to him, not to the Canadian Parliament.

I want to be very clear. What we seek here is not to accuse anybody, but rather to get the truth, to know where we are going.

If the Conservatives are so sincere and so eager to get names, why do they object to a judicial inquiry? Why do they not agree to what the Prime Minister of Canada has been suggesting since yesterday? Why do they not want to co-operate, so that we can go back to the orders of the day and get to work—

• (4:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member for Villeneuve has asked a question I wonder whether he would allow me to answer it for him. He just asked why we did not want an inquiry at this time. Does he wish to have an answer?

Mr. Caron: No, not now.

Mr. Caouette: Not just now, in a minute.

Mr. Starr: Well, do not ask questions then.

Mr. Caouette: You take note of all my questions and then you can answer. You will have plenty to answer.

[Translation]

On the orders of the day, Mr. Speaker.

We have been discussing this case since yesterday. Why are the Conservatives turning down the offer of the Prime Minister which seems to me quite reasonable, coming from him? The Prime Minister granted them what they were asking for in the Spencer case and now the Conservatives are not interested in granting the same privilege to the Prime Minister, that is, to set up a judicial inquiry in the Munsinger case.

Mr. Speaker, all the time we are discussing any matter or matters which might reflect on someone's reputation or might have something to do with a person and the security of the state, 20 million Canadians are watching

the members of parliament and witnessing the spectacle that has been going on in the House of Commons for the past two days, when we should be dealing with legislation, while allowing the setting up of a judicial inquiry which would settle the Munsinger case and enable us to clear up the matter.

Why are the Conservatives not more concerned about the legislation which we should be passing in the house in order to help the Canadian people?

There are poor and destitute people in Canada. There are legislative measures to fight against poverty in Canada, but we forget those who are hankering after justice while we linger over the discussion of a case that goes back four or five years.

The Conservatives refuse the judicial inquiry suggested or advocated by the Prime Minister of Canada. I said this morning, and I say again this afternoon, that we support the suggestion to set up this judicial inquiry in order to settle the Munsinger case once and for all.

Afterwards, if some people made any blunders, whether it be the Minister of Justice or anyone else, we could always refer the matter to the committee on privileges and elections and discuss the matter or the findings of the inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of saying any more today. However, I will say that it is a shame to keep every one here in parliament, to discuss a matter that should have been settled yesterday by adopting the suggestion made by the Prime Minister.

The Minister of Justice is told: Name people, lay your charges, name people.

The Prime Minister says: A judicial inquiry will provide all the names. It is no longer wanted. When truth is offered, it is refused. Someone must stick his neck out.

It is said: The Minister of Justice has exposed all the former ministers of the Diefenbaker government.

Mr. Speaker, things are not seen in this light outside parliament. To save a few small specimens of their breed, the Conservatives call on any prejudice. And at this time, every prejudice is good, according to them.

Mr. Speaker, let us stop all these insinuations and, as I said this morning, we have heard plenty of them in the last four years.

In fact, what is to be said about the insinuations made against the former Secretary of State, the former Justice Minister and the former Postmaster General?