

National Housing Act

Mr. Churchill: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think under the circumstances, the government having been defeated and obviously quite leaderless, with a lame duck Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) who is holidaying in Jamaica, it seems to me the only course open to the government is to adjourn the house now and have whoever is the leader take the appropriate action tomorrow. But there is another point I want to make, sir, and that is that when the house has reached a situation such as this it is within the competence of the Speaker himself to adjourn the house. It is obvious, sir, that no useful business can be carried on tonight and I suggest you exercise your authority.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is suggesting that I take the powers vested in me to adjourn the house when there is disorder in the house. I suggest to hon. members that I should not be placed in this position.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I raise a similar point of order to that raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill). These occasions arise, whether happily or unhappily who knows, but there are precedents for them, and the most recent was in February, 1963. I put it to hon. gentlemen opposite that on that occasion when a defeat was suffered in the house the government accepted its responsibility to parliament and the country and immediately moved the adjournment of the house, so that it might consult with itself and find out what the appropriate thing was to do. We now have three minutes left tonight. My point of order to you and to the government is that the appropriate thing for the government is to move the adjournment of the house so as to not make it impossible to carry on in an orderly fashion the business of the country, because I say if the government insists on proceeding there will be disorder. The situation is clear. I suggest the government move the adjournment of the house.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Is the President of the Treasury Board rising on a point of order?

Hon. E. J. Benson (President of Treasury Board): No, Mr. Speaker. I wish to proceed with the order of business which is before the house.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Starr: You have not got the authority.

Mr. Benson: We have a bill before the house—

Mr. Nielsen: On a point of order—

Mr. Benson: —to reduce the payments for people—

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the hon. member for Yukon rising on a point of order?

Mr. Nielsen: I am rising on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have not checked the precedents in a case of this nature but I well remember, as will hon. members in the house who were here at the time, the circumstances that occurred in February 1963, and surely it is a hollow mockery of the democratic form of government, after a government has been defeated, that it should have the arrogance to insist on placing business before the house which it has no hope—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: Surely, sir, these people across the way do not rule by divine right.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: They should resign.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is raising a point of order which was made previously.

Mr. Monteith: It has to be driven home.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I can honestly say, if I can just continue for a few words—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Benson: —that hon. members opposite do not want—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Benson: —to make it easier to own homes in this country and—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Benson: —I would be quite pleased—