

Inquiries of the Ministry

● (2:40 p.m.)

At the earliest convenient opportunity I will meet with the members of the executive of the Progressive Conservative party of Winnipeg South Centre and in consultation with them take whatever action is considered appropriate.

I shall continue to maintain a friendly and sympathetic interest in the Conservative party, in the hope that at some time in the future it will once again command my steadfast and unswerving support.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day. The hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. MacInnis).

[Translation]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

QUEBEC—IMPRISONMENT OF TWO ACCUSED PERSONS WITHOUT TRIAL

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member wish to rise on a question of privilege?

Mr. Grégoire: Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Our standing orders provide for a question period and since you just called the orders of the day, I was rising to ask a question before we proceed with the orders of the day.

I have precisely a question to put to the hon. Minister of Justice—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member will admit that since the other day, apparently by tacit agreement among the hon. members, there has been no question period. I believe that it is still the wish of the house.

Mr. Grégoire: No, Mr. Speaker, there has been no formal or informal agreement on that matter. No motion to that effect has been put before the house and I have never heard of such an agreement, tacit or otherwise.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. member has a question to ask, he should put it immediately, in order to settle the matter.

Mr. Grégoire: I have one question to put, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I even have two.

I should like to put my first question to the hon. Minister of Justice.

In view of the fact that two Montrealers, Vallières and Gagnon, have been detained in

[Mr. Churchill.]

prison for a year and a half, without even an opportunity for trial, which is further delayed—

[English]

Mr. Starr: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps before the hon. member for Ontario raises a point of order I might tell the hon. member for Lapointe that he is asking a question about a matter which is clearly sub judice. He is referring to a trial which is now in progress in Montreal. I believe the question is out of order.

Mr. Starr: My point of order is this, Mr. Speaker. You had passed orders of the day, the Assistant Clerk had read the motion, and you had recognized the hon. member for Cape Breton South. There was no need to revert to another order of procedure.

Mr. Speaker: I am in agreement with the hon. member, but it was just to facilitate the progress of business this afternoon that I thought I would allow the hon. member to ask a question. I have told him that the question is not in order. I suggest to the hon. member that I can hardly perceive of any question which is so urgent it might not wait a day or so before being put.

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, the standing orders are there and I ask that they be adhered to. Under the heading "Order of business", a forty minute question period is provided for on Tuesday. The clerk of the house has not read the orders of the day or the matter to be discussed. As soon as you said "Orders of the day", I rose and said: "Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question."

Under the standing orders, there should be a question period and I have every right to put a question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member will agree that I have allowed him, nevertheless, to put his question.

On the other hand, the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr) made a quite legitimate point, suggesting that I had already called the orders of the day.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, you call the orders of the day every day at the beginning of the question period. It was at that point that I rose.

Mr. Speaker: Order.